

July 19, 2022

Frederick L. Hill, Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment
Office of Zoning
441 4th Street NW
Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: **Testimony in Support of BZA Application No. 20594: Nezahat and Paul Harrison**

Dear Mr. Hill and Members of the BZA,

My name is Stan Wall, and I am the ANC Commissioner for single member district 3F04 which borders the northern edge of the applicant's project. I am also an individual whose profession focuses on housing and community development. And lastly, I am also a resident of a single-family home in Forest Hills and I live about 5 blocks away from the Applicants project.

Commissioner Dipa Mehta (SMD 3F04) has previously submitted a letter on behalf of ANC 3F expressing our ANC's unanimous support of this application and she has spoken to the very the exhaustive and detailed engagement and deliberative process that led us to the ANC supporting this application. I remain fully in support of the points raised in the ANC's letter of support and I wish to supplement the points articulated in the ANC letter of support with my professional and personal views on the application.

I am currently partner in charge of a real estate and economic development consulting firm based in Washington, DC. Here, I lead a team of 20 staff who are engaged in the business of helping cities, counties, and other municipalities advance equitable and inclusive growth. Much of our work focuses on strategies to advance the preservation and production of housing for all incomes, with a specific focus on preserving and producing such housing in transit-accessible communities. Additionally, I currently serve as vice chair of the board of Greater Greater Washington, a volunteer-driven, nonprofit organization that brings people together online and offline to discuss, organize, and advocate for an inclusive, diverse, growing Washington, DC region where all people can choose to live in walkable urban communities. I love living in Forest Hills and I hope to be in the neighborhood for many years to come.

My house sits on an 11,000 square foot lot and zoning would permit me to build a matter-of-right accessory unit behind my home, essentially yielding two units on the 11,000 sq ft lot. I realize there have been discussions about architectural character and appropriateness of the proposed project throughout this afternoon, and one aspect that I think is amazing about Forest Hills is that there is in fact the varied character of the neighborhood – we have massive embassy residences and large private homes, we have tiny bungalows, we have Tudor and Georgian homes, and we have modern and contemporary homes. As you tour through the neighborhood,

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all of these homes have varying relationships to the street and this again contributes to the very interesting character of Forest Hills. This range of housing forms and sizes allows for all types of people to be part of our community. I celebrate this diversity and the amenities offered by the neighborhood and I hope that we can continue to find ways to welcome new neighbors into our community.

The Mayor has articulated a goal of creating 36,000 units of new housing in the District by 2025. This is an ambitious goal in and of itself, but it still won't meet demand as the District continues to grow new jobs at a rate exceeding 35,000 jobs **per year**. Further, these new units cannot just be small apartment units in large multifamily buildings. There must be a range of housing typologies that allow for different types and sizes of families to find opportunities to live. There are some that believe that all units should be built as affordable units, but we need housing at all income levels – including new market-rate housing units – to meet demand and helps reduce the displacement of residents as higher-income residents bid up lower-priced units.

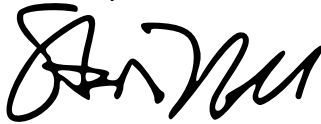
As articulated in October 2019 in the “Housing Equity Report: Creating Goals for Areas of Our City” and by the DC Department of Housing and Community Development, the communities of Rock Creek West – such as Forest Hills – are deemed high needs areas, defined as areas having the highest dedicated affordable housing production goals. Once again, while the applicant is not specifically proposing affordable housing, each additional unit of any type that is built in the community helps reduce the likelihood of displacement among existing naturally occurring affordable housing units in the community.

The proposed project would also assist the District in advancing sustainability through increased urban density. Single-family home zoning is the least efficient land use and particularly when such land is located within a 15-minute walk to a Metrorail station. I am owner of such a single-family home, and I live approximately 4 blocks away from the applicant's project. I understand, respect, and support my neighbors' desire to maintain the character of the neighborhood. That said, many homes in Forest Hills (including my own) sit on lots that are less than a quarter acre in size. The applicant's lot is currently over 30,000 square feet and if the proposed project moves forward, each home will still exceed a quarter-acre in lot size – fully in line with the prevailing lot sizes in the neighborhood.

In addition to the points above, I want to reinforce the points that fellow Commissioner Dipa Mehta has articulated, the ANC – specifically Commissioner Mehta -- facilitated an exhaustive engagement process to ensure all neighbors were heard and to push the applicant to tweak their plans to better address the specific concerns of neighbors within the 200 ft. radius of the property. I applaud the efforts of Commissioner Mehta in conducting such a diligent and deliberative engagement process and I further applaud the applicant for their responsiveness and follow-up on the issues raised. As the applicant mentioned, he has worked with the ANC and neighbors exhaustively and the applicant has made numerous refinements to their plans to accommodate the specific concerns of the community.

I for one am excited to continue to support the District's goal of creating new housing opportunities in Rock Creek West, and I believe the Applicant's project will be a step in the right direction. For this and the reasons above, I urge the BZA to grant the relief requested by the Applicants so that the proposed project can proceed to the next phases of permitting by the requisite District agencies. Thank you for this opportunity to share my views and for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stan Wall', written in a cursive style.

Stan Wall, ANC Commissioner, 3F04