

## **Attachment to Form 141**

Responses from Matt Johnson, Commissioner for 2B06, official representative for ANC 2B (Dupont Circle)

### **1. What legal interest does the person (i.e., owner, tenant, or mortgagee) have in the property?**

I am the duly elected Commissioner for ANC 2B Single-Member District 2B06. At the properly noticed regular meeting on July 12, 2023 and with a quorum of 8 of the 9 members, ANC 2B passed a resolution supporting the development of the Aston by the District of Columbia Department of Human Services as a non-congregate bridge shelter. This resolution (attached) identifies me and Chair Meg Roggensack (2B01) as the official representatives in this matter. As of December 31, 2024, Chair Roggensack will end her term by retiring from the ANC. This leaves me as the officially designated representative for ANC 2B.

The Aston falls entirely within the boundaries of ANC 2A (Foggy Bottom/West End). That is not in dispute. However, the boundary between ANC 2A and ANC 2B is located less than 500 feet from the Aston. As a result, residents in ANC 2B have an interest in what happens on this site, and in the larger community. In this area, the boundary between ANC 2A and ANC 2B follows Ward Place, New Hampshire Avenue, 21<sup>st</sup> Street, and M Street.

The closest point in ANC 2B to the Aston is the St Gregory Hotel, located only 475 feet away. The Bond, an apartment building in ANC 2B, is located only 485 feet away. The Duke Ellington Building, a former office building currently being converted to residential, is 530 feet away.

As a result, residents, businesses, and visitors to ANC 2B are directly impacted by the Aston.

ANC 2B should therefore be considered a party to this case.

### **2. How will the property owned or occupied by such person, or in which such person has an interest, be affected if the Appeal before the Board is approved or denied?**

The District of Columbia faces a crisis of homelessness. That crisis transcends the boundaries of ANCs and SMDs. We understand that cancelling a homeless shelter does not make homeless people disappear, but rather forces them to live in other spaces. They already exist in both ANC 2A and ANC 2B, along with many other, if not every other, ANCs. In fact, the best way to solve the homelessness issue is to provide homes for those who are homeless. The shelter at the Aston will provide bridge housing: That is, it will provide a place for people experiencing homelessness to live while permanent housing is arranged. This will directly improve the situation facing people who are homeless and those in these

neighborhoods who do have homes by reducing the number of people living in parks, on sidewalks, and in other public spaces.

As a result, the properties owned, occupied, or in which other interest is controlled, by residents residing in ANC 2B will be impacted directly by the decision to overturn the approval of the Aston. Impacted residents include those in the Bond, the Ellington, and in other residential units throughout ANC 2B.

ANC 2B took comment on this issue and voted in July 2023 to support the shelter at the Aston.

**3. Describe any other relevant matters that demonstrate how the person will likely be affected or aggrieved if the Appeal before the Board is approved or denied.**

As noted in the response to Question 2, the Aston is a direct government effort to reduce homelessness in the District. The shelter is already operating. Its closure will negatively impact residents throughout the neighborhood by forcing people to sleep on sidewalks, in parks, and in other public spaces.

It also negatively impacts those who are experiencing homelessness by forcing them to live in inhumane conditions. We cannot ignore their situation simply because they do not own or legally occupy real property within a few feet of the Aston.

Furthermore, by failing to make ANC 2B a party to this item, the BZA would be blunting the impact of residents nearby who, simply by a quirk of the drawing of legislative district boundaries, are not represented by ANC 2A, which is a party.

**4. What are the environmental, economic, or social impacts that are likely to affect the person and/or the person's property if the action requested of the Board is approved for denied?**

Should the Board approve the appeal by the West End DC Community Association (WEDCCA), residents in ANC 2B will face economic and social impacts. By eliminating this shelter, the Board would be removing the 190 beds available in this shelter from the District's toolbox. This would place nearly 200 people experiencing homelessness on the street, and that would impact residents in ANC 2B. This includes by reducing the ability to use park spaces inhabited by people experiencing homelessness, reducing the clear width of sidewalks where tents or encampments are placed, burdening public facilities such as libraries, and reducing sanitation.

While these impacts may be seen to be caused by those experiencing homelessness, in fact they are proximately caused by the District's failure to provide sufficient housing for those

who live here. Most, if not all, people experiencing homelessness do so not by choice, but because they have no alternatives.

Approving WEDCCA's appeal will result in negative impacts not only to the residents of ANC 2B who own or rent real property, but also to the homeless people of the District, some of whom reside in ANC 2B.

**5. What is the distance between the person's property and the property that is the subject of the Appeal before the Board? (Preferably no farther than 200 ft.)**

The nearest location within ANC 2B to the Aston (subject property) is 475 feet (St Gregory Hotel). Other properties fall within 400-600 feet, including the Bond apartments (485 feet) and the Duke Ellington Building (530 feet).