

**February 17, 2025**

**Alexander-Benons, LLC**  
1206 Staples Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20002

**Board of Zoning Adjustment**  
Office of Zoning  
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200  
Washington, D.C. 20001

**RE: Opposition to Mark Stilp's Request for Party Status in BZA Case #21226**

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment,

I am writing to formally oppose Mr. Mark Stilp's request for party status in the above-referenced case. While I respect Mr. Stilp's concerns and acknowledge his proximity to our property, I believe his request does not meet the Board's established criteria for party status, specifically the requirement to demonstrate a direct, specific, or unique impact caused by the development.

From my understanding, party status is typically granted to those who can show a distinct and specific interest in the case. While Mr. Stilp's proximity to the development is acknowledged, party status should not be granted solely based on proximity, and Mr. Stilp has not demonstrated a unique interest or impact that would justify his participation in this matter.

The concerns outlined in Mr. Stilp's request—such as property values, neighborhood character, and the building's size—are general in nature. While we acknowledge that the development may raise concerns, these issues are not specific to Mr. Stilp's property. The 5% variance we have requested from the zoning lot size standard, for example, is not offensive, and the concerns raised do not substantiate a unique impact on Mr. Stilp's property, especially in comparison to other residents.

I would like to highlight the thorough process we have followed with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) over the past several months that has culminated in their support of our Development. We have had multiple reviews with the Commissioners, and we have made every effort to incorporate their feedback. All recommendations have been documented and shared with the ANC at each stage. One of the key suggestions was to provide 3D renderings of our plans, which we did. The ANC highlighted homes in the neighborhood with similar third-floor extensions that they found appealing, and had no objections when reviewing our renderings. During our engagements with the ANC, Mr. Stilp was not a contributing member. We can see through past BZA case records (reference: BZA Case #19757) that Mr. Stilp has contributed in opposition to development in the past. In the past example, with an impacted solar panel system and an adjoining wall, we can see why Mr. Stilp was granted party status. But the circumstance here is not equal and we fear that this is an

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attempt to hinder development in the area and to unduly postpone our efforts. The request for Party Status was also made on the same day as our original hearing date, 2/12, and is now open for consideration due to the postponement caused by outstanding documentation from the Office of Planning.

Furthermore, I want to emphasize that our design is consistent with many other homes in the immediate area. Our property's original lot size and footprint are small, leading to necessary variances. Many of these variances—such as those related to lot size, setbacks, and the 10-foot maximum distance from adjacent structures—are not unique or imposing when viewed in the context of neighboring properties.

Additionally, I would argue that our development does not pose any more risk to public safety than any other property. We are not obstructing alley access, and an occupied home is inherently safer for the community than one left vacant and vulnerable to potential issues such as squatting. Moreover, we believe our project will bring added value to the neighborhood by offering a modern, updated living space for families or individuals seeking to live in the nation's capital.

For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully request that the Board deny Mr. Stilp's request for party status. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am happy to provide further information or clarification if you require it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jaranne Alexander-Benons". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a small heart-like flourish at the end.

Jaranne Alexander-Benons