Statement of Opposition and Basis for Party Status

Re: BZA Application No. 21518

Dear Members of the Board:

I own the adjoining property at 3917 Watson Place NW and request party status in opposition to the proposed project at 3919 Watson Place NW.

The proposed fence and accessory structure would directly affect my household's existing backyard access to the public alley and our parking space. The parking arrangement is offset, with each household's space located one position over behind the neighboring property.

I have received information from a neighboring property owner that the area behind these homes historically served as shared parking for three houses. I request that the historical parking and access arrangements, including any relevant deeds or sales agreements, be reviewed before approval of a design that would enclose this area. This history has not yet been independently verified, and I am not asserting that a legal easement has already been established.

I do not object to relocating my storage unit, which has been in place for over six years, and am willing to cooperate on a practical arrangement. My concern is that, even after relocating it, the proposed fence would leave a narrow passage and turn between my backyard gate and the public alley. This would make daily access, particularly maneuvering large trash and recycling bins, substantially more difficult. Accommodating the proposal would also require me to hire a contractor to reverse my metal gate's swing so that it opens into my backyard rather than toward the alley.

To my understanding of the property boundary, the applicant's existing storage unit and four trash bins are currently located entirely on my property, while my storage unit extends only a few inches onto hers. I raise this to explain the existing arrangement and the need for a workable plan. The proposal should not assume continued use of my property for the applicant's storage unit or bins.

I request that the applicant identify where all four bins would be stored on her property after construction and demonstrate how they would be moved for collection without obstructing my gate, the remaining access passage, or travel through the public alley.

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I am also concerned about vehicles backing out of the condominium parking spaces directly opposite the proposed construction. These spaces face the project area across the alley. The proposed fence and accessory structure could reduce the space drivers currently use to maneuver and make backing and turning more difficult. I request that adequate vehicle maneuvering clearance be demonstrated as part of the review.

I am further concerned that the restricted backyard and parking access, together with the visual impact of the proposed fence and accessory structure, could diminish my property's appeal to prospective buyers and reduce its market value. These are lasting changes to the functionality and enjoyment of my home.

The application states that the project would not adversely affect neighboring properties. My concerns identify specific effects that need to be addressed: restricted backyard and parking access, difficulty moving trash and recycling bins, contractor expenses to modify my gate, potential interference with vehicle maneuvering across the alley, and a potential reduction in my property's value.

These impacts would affect my property and household directly and distinctly from the general public. My concerns are based on my household's use of the existing gate, access route, and parking arrangement.

I respectfully request that the Board grant me party status in opposition and require revisions addressing these concerns before approving the requested relief.

Sincerely,
Edna "Neda" Pahlavani
3917 Watson Place NW
Washington, DC 20016