

**BEFORE THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT**

**APPLICATION OF  
MINERVA VISION GROUP**

**ANC 8B01**

**STATEMENT OF THE APPLICANT**

**I. NATURE OF RELIEF SOUGHT**

This statement is submitted on behalf of the Applicant, Minerva Vision Group (the “**Applicant**”), for the property located at 2430 Ainger Place, SE (Square 5740, Lot 295) (the “**Property**”) in support of its application pursuant to the 11 DCMR (the “**Zoning Regulations**”) Subtitle X § 901.2 for special exception relief from the use requirements under Subtitle U § 203.1(d) to provide a community center, for nonprofit and charitable use in the RA-1 zone.

**II. JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD**

The Board of Zoning Adjustment (the “**Board**”) has jurisdiction to grant the special exception relief requested herein pursuant to Subtitle X § 901.2 of the Zoning Regulations.

**III. BACKGROUND**

**A. The Property and the Surrounding Neighborhood**

The Property is in the RA-1 Zone District and is approximately 9611 sq. ft. A copy of the Zoning Map is attached at Tab A. Located on a corner lot, the Property is bound by Alabama Ave SE to the East, Ainger PL SE to the South, and two single-family homes to the south and west. The Property is improved as a church (hall) building that was previously used as a church (hall) (the “**Existing Building**”). Immediately adjacent to the Existing Building is the building parking lot with spaces for 65-70 cars. The Applicant also owns two other parcels immediately across the street from the Existing Building which provide parking for 70 cars.

The Property is located in the Woodland neighborhood of Ward 8, which is primarily

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residential in nature with some commercial uses. Immediately to the west at 2411 Ainger is three-story multifamily housing building operated by Emmanuel Baptist Church. Emmanuel Baptist Church sits directly across from its multifamily apartment building. Immediately to the south is another three story multifamily apartment building and to its east are three single family houses. Directly to the North across the alley/driveway is three-story multifamily apartment building, and to its immediately north is Allen Chapel AME Church.

## **B. Traffic Conditions and Mass Transit**

The Property has excellent access to public transportation options. The Southern Avenue Metro Station is located less than two miles from the Property. There are several Metrobus lines located in close proximity to the Property. To the southeast, approximately 635 feet of the property, is the 92-line located at the intersection of Ainger Place and Alabama Avenue, SE. The W2 and W3 lines stop directly in front of the Property. The area is bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly, as Walkscore.com designates the Property as “Very Walkable” and “Bikeable” with “Good Transit.”

## **C. The Project**

The Applicant will occupy the Building without making any structural or external changes to the Building. The Applicant intends to use the Existing Building as a community center and supporting spaces for nonprofit and charitable organizations proposes to transform the empty Existing Building into community center. (the “**Proposed Use**”). Internally, the Existing Building consist two large meetings and several supporting spaces and it is handicapped accessible.

The Applicant will operate and manage the Property. The Applicant will provide the space, materials, and supplies, and guidance for activities which will be regularly accessible and available to the community through designated events. The hours of operation will vary based on interest and involvement, but regularly scheduled events and classes will conclude by 9 p.m.

The Zoning Regulations provides that a “community center building” among other things

to be a use not organized for profit but shall be organized exclusively for the promotion of the social welfare. *See* 11-U DCMR §203.1(d). As the Applicant is a nonprofit organization its desired community center for nonprofit and charitable use of the falls within the scope of a use allowed as a Special Exception.

There are no plans to alter the building's interior or exterior space.

## **II. PARKING REQUIREMENT**

The Property has an abundance of parking and exceeds the requirements of Subtitle C § 701.5. Subtitle C § 701.5 has a minimum vehicle parking requirement for community center use of 1 per 1,000 sq. ft. The Property is 9,611 sq. ft, and would require 10 spaces for community center use. The Property has 140 designated parking spaces. The Property does not propose an increase in the size of the Property, which might otherwise trigger a vehicle parking requirement. *See* Subtitle C § 704.1. As such, no parking is required and thus none will be provided.

## **NATURE OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION RELIEF SOUGHT AND STANDARD OF REVIEW**

The Applicant requests special exception relief from the use requirements under Subtitle U § 203.1(d) to provide a community center building use in the RA-1 zone. The Board of Zoning Adjustment is authorized under § 8 of the Zoning Act, D.C. Official Code § 6-641.07(g)(2), to grant special exceptions, as provided in this title, where, in the judgment of the Board of Zoning Adjustment, the special exceptions:

- (a) Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;
- (b) Will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps; and
- (c) Will meet such special conditions as may be specified in this title.

Relief granted through a special exception is presumed appropriate, reasonable, and compatible with other uses in the same zoning classification, provided the specific requirements for the relief are met. In reviewing an application for special exception relief, “[t]he Board’s discretion . . . is limited to a determination of whether the exception sought meets the requirements of the regulation.” *President & Dirs. of Georgetown College v. D.C. Bd. of Zoning Adjustment*, 837 A.2d 58, 68 (D.C. 2003); *see also Stewart v. District of Columbia Bd. of Zoning Adjustment*, 305 A.2d 516, 518 (D.C. 1973)). If the applicant meets its burden, the Board must ordinarily grant the application. *Id.*

#### **IV. APPLICANT MEETS BURDEN FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION RELIEF**

The Proposed Use will be in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations, will not tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring property, and satisfies the special conditions for a community center building use under Subtitle U § 203.1(d).

##### **A. The Relief is Harmonious with the General Purpose and Intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps**

The Proposed Use will be in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and related maps. The “RA” zones are intended to “allow for limited compatible non-residential uses.” *See* Subtitle F § 101,2(d). The proposed community center building is compatible with the surrounding community.

The Proposed Use would be in harmony with the Zoning Regulations because it is intended to support programs and events for all residents, including youth and older adults.

The Applicant intends to promote its policy goals to use the former house of worship for community center use building providing for nonprofits and charitable organizations to meet, work and support a variety of artistic and educational classes and activities for the benefit and enjoyment of the surrounding community.

## **B. The Relief Will Not Tend to Adversely Affect the Use of Neighboring Property**

The Proposed Use will not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties. The proposed activities will primarily take place inside the building. The hours of operation will be limited and is not anticipated to extend beyond 9 p.m. Finally, the Applicant does not currently plan any structural changes to the exterior of the existing building. Therefore, this proposal will not impact light and air for neighboring properties because there will be no changes to the existing exterior conditions.

The District has placed a renewed policy emphasis on efficient land use and encouraging arts and culture. One of the general purposes of city planning objectives is to encourage the rehabilitation of abandoned structures within the community, such as the Property. The Proposed Use would be in harmony with the Zoning Regulations because it is intended to support programs and events for all residents, including youth and older adults, to develop and present creative work

## **C. The Project Satisfies the Special Conditions of Subtitle U § 203.1(d) for a Community Center Building Use**

In addition to the general special exception standard, this application satisfies the special conditions under Subtitle U § 203.1(d) for a community center building use in the RA-1 zone as follows:

- (1) The use shall not be organized for profit, but shall be organized exclusively for the promotion of the social welfare of the neighborhood in which it is proposed to be located;*

The community center building will be operated by a nonprofit organization for the artistic and educational skill-building activities for the surrounding community and as such, complies with this requirement.

- (2) The use shall not include retail sales to the general public but may charge a fee to members for services, which may include refreshments;*

The Applicant does not propose to provide retail sales to the general public on the Property

and as such complies.

(3) *The use shall not likely become objectionable in a R zone because of noise or traffic; and*

The Proposed Use will not likely become objectionable due to noise or traffic because the proposed activities will primarily occur inside the building. Further, the community building center use will operate during the day and will not extend past 9pm. The use is intended to service the neighborhood so most participants will be walking, biking, or taking public transit to the Property.

(4) *The use shall be reasonably necessary or convenient to the neighborhood in which it is proposed to be located.*

The Proposed Use will be convenient to the neighborhood in that it will provide support for nonprofit and charitable groups to use, provide space for meetings, artistic and education classes, and skill-building events in the heart of the Woodland neighborhood. Providing a space where the community can learn, design, and create will be a great benefit and addition to the surrounding neighborhood.

#### **IV. COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The Applicant met with Takema Keyes (Chair SMD 8B01) and Joseph Johnson (Chair ANC 8B) on January 22, 2025, to discuss plans to submit an application, seeking special exception relief for the property located at 2430 Ainger Place, SE, with the Board of Zoning Adjustment. and also attended ANC 8B's public meeting on February 18, 2025, to formally present the application.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

For the reasons stated above, the Project meets the applicable standards for special exception relief under the Zoning Regulations. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the Board grant the application.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lloyd J. Jordan

# **TAB A**

