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Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7B

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Ms. Carol J. Mitten
Chairperson
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Room 210
Washington, DC 20001

January 21, 2003

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Re: Case No. 02-15, Recreation Centers

Dear Ms. Mitten:

At our regular public meeting on Saturday, January 18th, ANC 7B / Naylor-DuPont unanimously approved – with all members present - a motion to encourage the adoption of a text amendment covering all recreation and community centers as a matter-of-right. This would allow renovation and construction efforts to continue on schedule and avoid unnecessary delays due to the time needed to obtain variances from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA). Specifically, I am writing regarding Case No. 02-15, the Hillcrest Community Activity Center.

As the ANC Commissioner for 7B-05, I am greatly concerned that construction of our long-awaited, community-approved and code-compliant Hillcrest Community Activity Center could be delayed if the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and Office of Planning (OP) standards are not adopted for recreation and community facilities as part of the text amendment approval process.

Case 02-15
Exhibit 50

ANC 7B supports the adoption of the DPR and OP standards, as follows:

- 40% lot occupancy as a matter-of-right in a residential zone. This takes into account DPR's physical needs and development policies, and is mindful of the need to maintain green space.
- 45-foot height limitation in residential districts. This is aesthetically respectful of residential areas.
- Any facility not in excess of 50,000 square feet in size be treated as a matter-of-right project.

The Hillcrest community has been actively involved from the start in the design and programming of the new Hillcrest Community Activity Center. Establishing new blanket height and size restrictions will limit the District's ability to offer community centers that meet contemporary needs - needs that far exceed the outdated model of a glorified brick storage-closet for sports equipment. As an employee of the Cultural Affairs Division of the Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources, which is currently renovating and/or rebuilding centers throughout the County, I see the reality of this paradigm-shift on a daily basis. Communities now expect centers to offer computer resources, state-of-the-art

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exercise equipment, study and after-care facilities, adult learning opportunities, cultural and arts offerings and community meeting rooms. None of these critical activities could possibly be accommodated by a structure limited to 15 or 20,000 square feet. But examples all across Arlington, and other surrounding jurisdictions, prove that it is entirely possible to provide modern amenities in a larger package that still is sized and sited to complement a particular community - be they residential, mixed-use, or high-density.

The Hillcrest Community Activities Center will be located less than two blocks from my home. The current unsecured site has become a notorious hideout and escape route for criminals from outside of our community, attracted by the existing unlit paths winding through dense, unkempt woods. The new Center, and its attendant iron fencing, pruned woods, and better-lit paths, also is key to a series of crime prevention measures which, over a period of years, have been planned and approved under close examination by a consortium of our community, law enforcement and city administrators and officials. Thus, its importance extends far beyond its principal use as a Recreation Center, as well it should. Ample time and care has been taken by the Hillcrest community to determine the shape and scope of our Community center.

As a citizen, I join my Hillcrest neighbors in expressing great anticipation for the modern, accessible, safer and user-friendlier center that we have planned for and approved of as a community. As Commissioner of ANC 7B-05, I join my elected colleagues in giving voice to the wishes of the voters by strongly encouraging that the DC Zoning Commission adopt the perfectly reasonable standards recommended in this letter. To delay the Hillcrest Center, or any other previously approved and community-supported projects across the District, due to blanket standards that do not reflect the desires of said community, would be a travesty.

I thank you for your consideration and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Jim Byers,
Commissioner, ANC 7B-05/Naylor-DuPont,
Hillcrest, Southeast,
Washington, DC

★★★ NAYLOR DUPONT
Advisory Neighborhood Commissio. 3

JIM BYERS
ANC 7B Commissioner, 7B05

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