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ANC 3F04

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Chair Mitten and Members of the Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, N.W. – Room 200
Washington, D.C. 20001

Case No. 02-19 [Text Amendment - Forest Hills Tree & Slope Protection Overlay]

Dear Zoning Commissioners:

This letter confirms points and addresses questions raised by Commissioner May on September 5, 2002, regarding tree canopy as related to (a) combined sewer and (b) separate sewer areas.

1) Forest Hills is served by separate sanitary sewers and storm sewers (not combined sewers). But it has few storm sewers.

a) Attached is a copy of part of the DC Water and Sewer Authority's (WASA's) color-coded map of the D.C. sewer system, including Forest Hills and nearby areas. Red lines are sanitary sewers. Dark blue lines are storm sewers. Lighter blue marks streams. Green areas are parks. (WASA's predecessor prepared the map in 1986.)

b) Most of the Forest Hills overlay district has sanitary sewers – without storm sewers.

c) Generally, storm water in Forest Hills flows down the street into a storm sewer or directly into a stream. For example, relatively short storm sewers discharge into Soapstone Creek, northward from Lenore Lane and southward from Linnean Avenue, 29th and 32nd Streets. (The map does not mark Soapstone Creek, a perennial stream that floods frequently in major storms.)

2) Separate sewers serve two thirds of the District. About 1,000 discharge points owned by DC Government (and, arguably, other points if not separately permitted – such as Howard University Law School and Hillwood Museum in Forest Hills) are covered by the District Government's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System ("MS4") permit from EPA. All storm water not absorbed into the soil and not evaporated from tree leaves or other surfaces, drains to streams and rivers, carrying air borne pollutants and land droppings from cars and living creatures. Uncontrolled storm water also erodes banks, slopes and soils – thereby further degrading water quality.

*District 3F04: 36th & Connecticut & Ellicott & Davenport + Connecticut & 32nd & Ellicott & Brandywine
in ANC 3F, roughly Porter to Nebraska, Rock Creek to Wisconsin*

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
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EXHIBIT NO.242

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The District is in year two of its first three years of planning to remediate MS4 discharges – at a cost of \$3 million per year. Anticipated ultimate remediation costs under subsequent three-year MS4 permits from EPA seem likely to be much larger.

a) Tree canopy and permeable surface in MS4 areas holds on to pollutants so that they do not reach water bodies and, instead, are broken down in the soil, in mulch or on the leaves or needles of trees by exposure to air, bacteria and other agents. Tree canopy preservation and expansion will tend to reduce remediation costs.

b) Separate storm sewer areas include all of Ward 3, and all of Wards 7 and 8 east or south of the Anacostia River, except for the relatively small Fort Stanton Sewer Shed.

3) Combined sewers serve one third of the District, conveying most rainwater reaching those sewer pipes to the Blue Plains Advanced Waste Water Treatment Plant. During heavy rains, some of the combined flow overloads the sewer pipes and must overflow to the rivers and creeks. About 60 overflow points are covered by WASA's EPA permit for Blue Plains. As EPA required and after years of planning, WASA has proposed a phased, long-term control plan, costing \$1.3 billion, to correct most of the overflow problems (starting with Anacostia River remediation).

a) Combined sewer areas include Georgetown, Dupont Circle, the Piney Branch Sewer Shed (comprising one-fifth of all combined sewer areas) which drains from Takoma Park to Piney Branch (a tributary of Rock Creek), part of Ward 5, and downtown.

b) Tree canopy and permeable surface in combined sewer areas helps reduce overflows because it prevents some of the rain water from ever reaching the sewer and slows down intensity of flow of other rainwater. Tree canopy preservation and expansion (e.g., in areas in Wards 4 and 5) will tend to reduce some remediation costs or improve results.

Faithfully,



David J. Bardin

Attachment:

Copy of part of District of Columbia Government, Department of Public Works, Water and Sewer Utility Administration, SEWERAGE SYSTEM [including Forest Hills T&SPO District between 36th Street / Linnean Terrace on left and Melvin C. Hazen Park on right, below "PARK" (i.e., Rock Creek Park) and above Connecticut Ave.]

