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Commissioner - 3F03
Advisory Neighborhood Commission
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August 23, 2004

Mr. Alberto P. Bastida, AICP
Secretary
Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Forest Hills Tree and Slope Overlay District - ZC 02-19

Dear Mr. Bastida:

On August 18, 2004, my ANC3F colleagues filed a letter with the Zoning Commission regarding "Problems with OP's canopy estimates for Forest Hills." The letter attempts to discredit the Office of Planning alternative proposal which provides for the protection of trees in Forest Hills by the control of canopy cover. In an effort to condemn the canopy approach, the letter refers to "flaws in OP estimation techniques and their application" by referring to trees and the canopy of lots in two squares located in my SMD.

ANC3F's letter to the Zoning Commission contains serious factual errors regarding these squares and OP's alternate proposal. I believe it is important that the Zoning Commission have correct and accurate information for considering the Forest Hills Tree and Slope Overlay District (FHTSOD) which is extremely important to my constituents who live in the FHTSOD. Some of the errors in the ANC letter are described below.

It appears that the reference to Square 2777 in the ANC letter is a typo and the correct square is 2277 which includes two developed lots and not one lot as claimed by Mr. Urban and ANC3F. The lots in square 2277 are lots numbered 3 and 8. The southern border of square 2277 faces the 3100 block of Fessenden Street, N.W. and the other sides of the square border US park land. Therefore, the canopy for square 2277 in the OP report did not shrink the canopy, as alleged in the ANC letter, but the square is larger than one lot and the canopy reported in the OP report is for the square and not one lot.

The ANC letter makes reference to Square 2063 which is not

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in the FHTSOD and apparently the reference should be to square 2263. Square 2263 is one of the larger developed squares in the FHTSOD and has 36 lots including the lots with the Owl's Nest, 3031 Gates Road, N.W. and the Capital Memorial Church, 3150 Chesapeake Street, N.W. ANC3F's letter challenges a canopy cover "of less than 25%" for the Owl's Nest. The report of the Office of Planning clearly states that the 23.4% canopy coverage is for square 2263 and not the Owl's Nest lot. (Table on page 7) Therefore, the oversight alleged by ANC3F did not occur.

The ANC letter also questions the photo interpretation of the area on the north side of Brandywine Street at the rear of the Capital Memorial Church. It should be noted that this steep sloping area includes public space adjacent to the roadway of Brandywine Street. The public space is measured horizontally from the curb and could very well include part of the slope.

I am not aware that anyone claims that the estimating of a tree canopy by photo interpretation and ground observation can be 100% accurate. By the very nature of the work there will be error from not recording existing trees and errors showing trees where trees do not exist. These errors should tend to cancel one another and the final result for the canopy of the total area should be close to what exists.

There is no evidence to support ANC3F's claim that "OP's methods seem rife with opportunity for bias and classification errors which tend to make such data unreliable." or to support a claim that "OP's methodology is biased to underestimate actual canopy for present purposes."

Very sincerely yours,



Robert V. Maudlin
Commissioner ANC3F03

cc: ANC3F Commissioners