Testimony of
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3B
Before the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
Government of the District of Columbia

D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2003 JUN 30 PM 4:34

By
Jonathan J. Orr,
Chairman ANC3B
June 30, 2003

Members of the Commission, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony for the record in regard to Zoning Commission Case 02-50, the Saint Luke's Condominium proposed unit development.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3B (ANC 3B) passed a resolution in March of this year regarding the proposed Saint Luke's Condominium Project. Our interest and concern about this project arose due to its proximity to our ANC. Although the property itself is entirely within ANC 3C, it lies almost exactly on the border of the two commissions. In fact, the entrances, street access, traffic impact, and bulk of the building have a disproportionate impact on ANC 3B and residents of ANC 3B.

There were a wide variety of opinions on this project in our community. Some entirely opposed it, while others strongly supported it. This dichotomy produced substantial debate about the development and the proposed ANC resolution. In the end, due in large part to the strong community support for Saint Luke's Methodist Church and the benefits it will derive from the sale of its property for this project, ANC 3B voted not to oppose the development. The resolution (see attached) passed the Commission unanimously.

However, it should be noted that ANC 3B's resolution on the project states that "ANC 3B does not oppose development of the property." The Commission raised significant concerns about the project and its impact on the community as a whole, and for this reason could not definitively state that it supports the project in its entirety as it was proposed at the time of our resolution.

While there were many objections and concerns noted about the project during our meetings – including its architectural style, resident parking, construction traffic, and provision for trash pick-up to name just a few – the focal point of concern for ANC 3B, as reflected in our resolution, was the orientation of the proposed building.

As currently sited, the Saint Lukes Condominium project lies directly on the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Calvert Street. The building has been purposely oriented with the bulk of the facade bordering these two streets. At the time we passed our resolution, the only open space was left behind the building in an effort to reduce the building's impact on homes behind the project.

ZONING COMMISSION
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Case 02-50
Exhibit 34

ZONING COMMISSION
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CASE NO.02-50
EXHIBIT NO.34

While the architectural merits of this orientation can be debated, what cannot be in doubt is that the design of the building left no provision for a driveway for the building or a "lay by" for use by delivery vehicles or temporary visitors. The design provides only for a small driveway to access the garage and loading docks, which is not immediately adjacent to the entrance to the building.

ANC 3B expresses great concern that this failure to provide an adequate driveway for short term parking and delivery at the Saint Lukes Condominium project will have a very negative impact on traffic on both Wisconsin Avenue and Calvert Street. The Wisconsin Avenue/Calvert Street intersections are very high-traffic areas for cars, busses, and pedestrians. Stopped vehicles or turning vehicles can quickly reduce available driving lanes to zero and bring traffic to a standstill. Calvert street as it borders the project is itself a high-traffic feeder to Wisconsin Avenue, with dedicated turn lanes to access Wisconsin Avenue.

We find it highly likely that both Wisconsin Avenue and Calvert Street as they border this property will soon prove to be irresistible, albeit illegal, short term parking spots for the inevitable deliveries and "quick visits" to this building once it is completed. The result will at best be unneeded increased traffic congestion on these two streets. At worst, both drivers and pedestrians will experience dangerous driving conditions as vehicles attempt to by-pass the immobile vehicles parked illegally in front or beside the building.

While the developers of the project have posited that visitors to the building and deliveries can all be funneled through the loading docks/garage access, we find this to be a convoluted and impractical solution. In an ideal world, everyone visiting this condominium project would know to park in the designated visitor parking in the building's garage or make deliveries in the loading dock space and not ignore "No Parking, No Standing" signs. Unfortunately, we live in a real world of Fed Ex trucks, pizza deliveries, taxi cab pick-ups and drop-offs, and short-term visitors who will prefer to park their car on the street rather than venture into a loading dock or garage they do not know exits.

ANC 3B, as reflected in our resolution of March 2003, would like to see some provision made to provide for an adequate driveway for this building. While this may require some minor redesign of the property, we feel it will add immeasurably to the quality of life for the residents of the building and greatly reduce the negative and dangerous impact on traffic the property might create as currently planned.

In addition to, or at a minimum in lieu of a driveway, ANC 3B would like to see some provision made to prevent vehicles calling at the building from parking or standing on Calvert Street and Wisconsin Avenue as they immediately adjoin the property. Such a provision might include, but is not limited to, fencing or railing, heavy shrubbery, etc. to prevent and discourage disembarkation from vehicles.

Members of the Commission, again, thank you for giving ANC 3B this opportunity to make our concerns and those of our constituents known, and we hope it will be of use to you as you consider this planned unit development.

Respectfully,

Jonathan Orr,
Chairman, ANC 3B

- END -

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This resolution was introduced and considered during a regularly scheduled public meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3B, March 13, 2003.

Resolution of ANC 3B
in regards to
Proposed St. Luke's Condominium Project

Whereas St. Luke's Church has determined that it will sell property it owns on Calvert Street and Wisconsin Avenue, Lot 815 in Square 1035, ("the property") in order to preserve the financial integrity of the church and its programs;

Whereas the proposed developers of the St. Luke's property, Walnut Street Development Corporation ("the developers") have come before ANC 3B to ask for its approval of the developer's application for a change of zoning status for the property;

Whereas ANC 3B by District of Columbia law has an advisory role in local planning and zoning decisions, and the property in question is within 200 feet of ANC 3B's boundaries;

Whereas ANC 3B recognizes that many of its residents support the sale of the property in order to preserve the financial integrity St. Luke's Church and it programs;

Whereas ANC 3B also recognizes the potential negative impacts the development of the property may have on the community;

Be it resolved that, based on the PUD application submitted by the developers with the District of Columbia Zoning Commission on 24 Feb 2003, case 02-50 (the "planned development"):

I. ANC 3B does not oppose development of the property, if the sale of the property is for the direct benefit of St. Luke's Church and its programs;

II. ANC 3B plans to seek party status in case 02-50 in order to make its concerns known to the Zoning Commission so that these concerns may be addressed in any final zoning order on the planned development;

III. ANC 3B raises significant concerns about the currently proposed development, and seeks to have the developer and the Zoning Commission address these concerns during the zoning decision process. These concerns include:

i. The current orientation of the development's planned vehicular and pedestrian entrances, leaving no provision for a driveway for the building to allow for temporary parking for the use of those who call at the building, except in the entrance to the garage or in the garage itself;

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ii. The potential impact of the proposed development on traffic along Calvert Street, especially the lack of a provision to prevent vehicles calling at the building from parking or standing on Calvert Street as it immediately adjoins the property. Such a provision might include, but is not limited to, fencing or railing along Calvert Street, shrubbery, etc. to prevent/discourage disembarkation from vehicles along the street.

iii. Construction traffic for the project, especially as it impacts rush hour traffic. It is the desire of ANC 3B that the developers agree to limit construction traffic and deliveries to the site to the hours of construction permitted by DC law; that efforts be taken to ensure to the greatest extent possible that construction not impede traffic on Wisconsin Avenue or Calvert Street during "rush hour" (7-9 AM, 4-7 PM); that no lanes on either Wisconsin Avenue or Calvert Street will be closed or blocked before or during construction; and that no construction vehicles be "staged" or parked within the ANC's boundaries, except on the property itself.

IV. ANC 3B will work with the developers to come to a formal agreement regarding construction traffic patterns and limits.

Further be it resolved that, in recognition of the potential negative impacts of the planned development on the community, ANC 3B asks the developers to consider undertaking certain community enhancement activities in order to offset some of these negative impacts. ANC 3B asks that the developers consider undertaking the following community enhancement activities:

V. Landscape the Wisconsin Avenue/Calvert Street/37th Street traffic island, and provide for the care of such landscape improvements. The manner and plans for these improvements will be decided in consultation with ANC 3B and appropriate District of Columbia authorities.

VI. Work with the District of Columbia Office of Planning and its consultant Hellmuth Obata+Kassabaum on the Wisconsin Avenue Master Plan. The developer shall consult with ANC 3B on the progress and plans for this project and ultimately make a proportionate contribution towards the plan's implementation as it pertains to "beautification efforts" (trees, plantings, etc.) on Wisconsin Avenue between Calvert Street and Whitehaven Street.

VII. Provide donations to neighborhood charitable (501c3 or as otherwise defined by IRS regulations) community organizations whose focus is community recreational activities or the promotion of such activities, in recognition of the positive impacts to the community of such organizations, according to the following provisions:
i. Total contributions to all eligible organizations in aggregate shall be no less than $25,000;
ii. Contributions shall be in the form of grants, and grants will only be made for specific

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purposes or programs. Eligible applicants for such grants must specify the purpose benefits of projects in their grant request;

iii. The total contribution amount cannot be awarded to only one eligible organization;

iv. Contributions shall be granted only to eligible organizations located within ANC 3B boundaries;

v. The selection of grant awards and the amounts of each grant will be decided by the developers in consultation with ANC3B according to guidelines to be established at a future time;

vii. Grants will be made no later than two years following the award of a perfected PUD order from the Zoning Commission, but will not be made or considered before such time.

-END-

Commission Action:
[ ] Approved [ ] Disapproved

Vote (of 5) Commissioners:____ in favor with _____ opposed.

_____ Date:_____
Jonathan Orr, Chairman

_____ Date:_____
As Witnessed by Commission Secretary
Michael Halpin

727-6072

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