



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N W
WASHINGTON, D C 20004

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June 30, 2005

D C. Zoning Commission
Suite 210
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Zoning Commission Case No. 04-18 -- Mount Vernon Triangle District

Dear Members of the Commission:

The Zoning Commission is currently considering a proposal from the Office of Planning (OP) to create a new Mount Vernon Triangle District within the Downtown Development District. While I am generally supportive of OP's goals for the emerging residential area between Massachusetts and New York Avenues, I have two concerns about the proposed regulations as they would affect Square 483, the block bounded by 5th, 6th and K Streets and New York Avenue, N.W., as follows:

1. The OP recommended that the square be rezoned from C-3-C to DD/C-3-C, in order to make the new regulations applicable to development in the square. The Zoning Commission also proposed to consider rezoning the square to DD/C-2-C, as an alternative. I support including the property in the DD District to make it subject to the Overlay, but I believe the Commission should leave the underlying zoning of C-3-C. There is a long planning and zoning history to this square, including neighborhood support for designating the property in the high density commercial category on the Generalized Land Use Map and the subsequent zoning of the property to C-3-C. The ANC has voted to support DD/C-3-C zoning of the property as requested by the owner. While much thought has been given to the retail and design requirements to be applicable to the square, there is no basis that I can see for rethinking previous decisions to allow high density commercial development on the square. In my view, changing the zoning to C-2-C would be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

~~EXHIBIT NO.~~
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EXHIBIT NO.21

2. I believe that the OP proposal over-controls what should happen at the corner of 5th and K Streets. I understand that there is a desire to create a central focus for the Triangle at that corner. However, in creating the 72 by 72 foot square and then further breaking that square into four quadrants, each with separate controls, the proposed regulations go too far in limiting what can happen on the site. The proposed regulations further seem to suggest that the four corners of the intersection are being addressed in a consistent manner. However, there are exceptions and differences in the proposals which make it unlikely that all four corners will be developed in the same way and the burden of the proposal seems to fall most heavily on the Square 483 corner, the northwest corner of the intersection. I believe that the desired public purposes could be achieved by a more simple regulation which required retail along the applicable street frontages and which did not attempt to dictate a very precise design solution. A regulation of this specificity on both use and design does not occur anywhere else in the area or in the Zoning Regulations at all.

I support OP's efforts to enhance the retail component in the Mount Vernon Triangle area but I strongly suggest that the Commission could achieve the desired purposes without the two components I identified above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Ambrose". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sharon Ambrose
Councilmember - Ward 6