DORCHESTER TENANTS ASSOCIATION

(The official representative of Dorchester House tenants)

c/o Campbell C. Johnson, III, President **(202) 232-1127**
2480 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Apartment #234 **Fax (202) 232-8771**
Washington, D. C. 20009

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December 8, 2004

Ms. Carol Mitten
Chairperson
Zoning Commission of the
District of Columbia
One Judiciary Square, Suite 210 South
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

By Fax: (202) 727-6072;
Page One of Seven
Case No. 04-30: Proposed Harris Teeter Supermarket & Office Complex

Dear Ms. Mitten:

As president of the Dorchester Tenants Association, I represent tenants in the 394 residential units of the Dorchester House. The proposed development project will be right next door to our building.

My fellow tenants do not want a Harris Teeter supermarket and office complex to be located in the Citadel building on Kalorama Road. The location of such a business in the Citadel building would have a major negative impact on Dorchester tenants and other neighborhood residents.

Please know that I have participated in several of the ANC meetings at which representatives of Harris Teeter and its allies made presentations regarding the proposed development project. These presentations revealed serious problems that will result if this project goes forward. Also, the circumstances in our neighborhood indicate that there will be major problems and a huge erosion in the quality of life of residents in this area and persons who visit and/or travel through the area. Many of my neighbors have told me they were very alarmed by the prospect of a Harris Teeter supermarket and office complex located in the Citadel.

<u>The Harris Teeter Supermarket is not Needed</u>

The Harris Teeter development project would add little in regard to services in our neighborhood. Dorchester House tenants are well served in regard to groceries, sundry items, etc. A large Safeway Store is on Columbia Road about two blocks away. And within a block or two, there are several other grocery stores, drug stores, etc.

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CASE NO. 04-30
EXHIBIT NO. 18

Also, we have a well-stocked, friendly grocery store in our building and another one within a block of the building. These markets will probably be closed due to heavy price competition from this major retailer. There is also a small video store in the Dorchester House. **Any replacement business(es) would probably stay open very late to meet the competition from Harris Teeter, which would bring an adverse change the residential character of this neighborhood.**

Liquor License Issue

We understand that Harris Teeter is seeking a liquor license. In fact, the firm indicates that its final decision on whether to pursue the project depends on securing a liquor license. Clearly, the Harris Teeter supermarket would be a negative influence in our neighborhood because it certainly expects to use liquor sales as a major profit center for its store. **The store's liquor advertising and promotional incentives are likely to attract customers and non-customers who will be negative influences in our neighborhood.**

The Dorchester Market sells beer and wine. However, the character of the market and the staff relationships with customers do not cause these sales to be an attraction for underage drinking, loiterers, unsavory persons or criminal activity.

You should know that an open-air, illegal drug market has flourished at the corner of 17th and Euclid Streets for more than 25 years. Locating a Harris Teeter supermarket on Kalorama Road would be an invitation for the drug trade to expand and use the supermarket's customer traffic as cover for its dealings.

Existing Heavy Neighborhood Traffic Burden

First, it must be noted that Kalorama Road and the adjacent streets are very small with one driving lane in each direction. These streets are currently heavily burdened with neighborhood and commuter traffic. **The proposed Harris Teeter supermarket and office complex would cause major gridlock throughout the day and evening on all adjacent streets.**

Kalorama Road has two major apartment buildings on it. There are two large condominium-apartment buildings currently under construction at the corner of 17th Street. A huge project is nearing completion a block and a half away toward 18th Street. (The Dorchester House owners are planning an additional 120+ unit, "by right" development which will eliminate the parking lot residents use behind the Citadel.) The Harris Teeter supermarket and office complex would severely aggravate this situation.

Currently, during rush hours, eastbound Columbia Road traffic detours on to Euclid Street. At these times eastbound Euclid Street bumper-to-bumper traffic usually

extends from 16th Street to beyond 17th Street. It can take at least five lights before you can cross 16th Street. Gridlock is a frequent occurrence. (Throughout the day, 17th Street picks up Columbia Road's overflow westbound traffic, which would otherwise turn south on 18th Street. This traffic goes to Kalorama Road then turns right toward 18th Street.)

Westbound on Euclid Street, bumper-to-bumper traffic congestion extends from 17th Street almost to 14th Street. There is frequent gridlock on 15th and 16th Streets at the intersections with Euclid Street, Kalorama Road and other streets extending to Florida Avenue and U Street to the south and Columbia Road to the north.

Northbound on 16th Street, the congestion usually extends from Euclid Street down the hill three blocks to Florida Avenue. It takes at least four lights to get past Euclid Street.

Entering 16th Street from Kalorama Road is very difficult whether you are going northbound or southbound. The Harris Teeter supermarket and office complex will substantially add to this congestion, even if a traffic light is installed at the intersection.

The Harris Teeter presenters made many assurances about the scaled-down size of trucks that would be used to supply the market. These assurances are unconvincing when considered against the reality of daily truck traffic caused by the small Dorchester Market and the delivery, vendor and trash trucks that currently serve the Dorchester House. **Harris Teeter's trucks will just add to the congestion. Likely result: mid-block gridlock on a routine basis.**

Locating the Harris Teeter supermarket and office complex will provide non-stop gridlock due to customers entering and leaving the garage, delivery and trash trucks. All of this would be added to the congestion that now exists with four other major apartment parking lot and garage driveways that converge on the eastside of the Citadel building. The proposed project would make this street and neighborhood a nightmare.

Current and Future Parking Problems

While most people in the neighborhood own cars, most houses in this neighborhood do not have off-street parking. Off-street apartment parking is expensive. A large university dormitory is located one block away at 16th and Euclid Street, so that routinely many out of state cars are located throughout the neighborhood.

The Harris Teeter presenters indicate that some parking spaces will be provided in the facility for supermarket and office complex employees and customers. However, the number of proposed parking spaces seems totally inadequate to handle the burden caused by these persons. While some people in the

neighborhood may walk to their supermarket, many of the commuters who travel through this area may be inclined to stop off to make purchases going to or from work. The number of customers that can be expected, if the supermarket is going to be profitable, will be far greater than the number of available parking spaces in the garage.

Secondly, the Harris Teeter presenters indicated that a number of additional business offices will be part of the project. It is likely that these offices will have 100 or more employees. Most of these people may work full time in the offices, while others may move back and forth to other work sites. Additionally, these offices are subject to have numerous visitors during the hours the businesses will operate. Since there no Metro rail service within ½ mile and the closest bus stop is two blocks up a hill from 17th Street and Kalorama Road, most of these people will depend on automobile transportation.

The Harris Teeter presenters did not make any assurances about the number of parking spaces in the garage or neighborhood that would be required by the office complex businesses. Employees and visitors to these businesses will constitute a major burden on the garage and neighboring streets. This traffic will cause severe problems during the morning and evening rush hours (3:30 to 7:30pm). The garage spaces will be totally inadequate to handle this crush of traffic. Parking spaces on nearby streets cannot absorb this heavy load. Any double parking will result in mid-block gridlock.

Opposition to any Permit for Office Complex Build Out

The Harris Teeter presenters indicated that a top floor would be added to the current structure, so they can accommodate their office complex. **For the reasons noted above, we oppose any permit or zoning variance, waiver or other accommodation to allow for an office complex addition or build out as part of this project.**

Nuisance Neighbor

Several major nuisance issues were identified above. However, quality of life and health problems for neighboring residents will be exacerbated by a marked increase in the level of rodent infestation, which is sure to accompany the supermarket.

The Harris Teeter presenters said that they will load and unload their trucks inside their structure with the doors closed. They assured residents that other rodent control procedures would be used aggressively. However, their assurances were not persuasive in light of the reality of other supermarkets located in densely populated urban sites.

The Dorchester House has an ongoing problem with mice in our apartments. Many rats breed and live around the building and throughout the neighborhood. There is no doubt that these problems will be much worse, if the proposed development project is approved.

ANC "Approval" Problems

For a considerable time period, Mr. Josh Gibson, ANC Commissioner has included Harris Teeter presentations on his meeting agendas. Even after, nearly a year, the presenters did not have convincing answers for most of the important questions. Many people tell me they still staunchly oppose the development project.

I expect someone hopes that many residents who oppose this project would be worn down by the process of talking and listening. Many of my neighbors have stated that they tired of the meetings and the failure of the Harris Teeter presenters to provide satisfactory answers. But, while residents received a few more answers, their opposition was still solid.

Mr. Gibson seems to favor every real estate development project in this area. My neighbors get the impression that business interests might influence his continued advocacy more than it would be subject to the interests of residents. I would not be surprised if an ANC vote was taken to approve the project, once many opponents gave up on attending meetings.

Attached is a copy of the letter I gave to a neighbor of mine for delivery to city officials at a January 2004 meeting in the Third District station. (I could not attend.)

I would be pleased to testify in person on these matters and/or answer any questions. However, I will be out of town between December 13th and the 30th.

Sincerely,

Campbell C. Johnson, III
President

Attachment

cc:
DTA Board of Directors
Selected neighbors

DORCHESTER TENANTS ASSOCIATION

(The official representative of Dorchester House tenants)

c/o Campbell C. Johnson, III, President **(202) 232-1127**
2480 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Apartment #234 **Fax (202) 232-8771**
Washington, D. C. 20009

January 9, 2004

To Whom It May Concern
D. C. Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, N. E.
Washington, D. C. 20002 By hand

Dear Sir or Madam:

I have just learned this evening from the proprietor of the Dorchester Market that a meeting regarding a proposed market will take place at the Third District Police Headquarters on Saturday, January 10th at 10:00AM. As president of the Dorchester Tenants Association, I know that tenants of the Dorchester House (394 units) are very concerned about this prospect.

Please know that we have not received any prior notice of the Saturday meeting or the proposal to place a market in the Citadel roller skating facility on Kalorama Road. Since this building is right next door to the Dorchester House, we would like to express our feelings in an appropriate forum. I am unable to attend the Saturday meeting due to a prior commitment, which I must keep. Also, it is too late for me to arrange for another board member to attend.

Regarding the idea of a market, supermarket, or any other similar retail business locating in the Citadel building or on this street, please note the following:

1. **The location of such a business in the Citadel building would have a major negative impact on Dorchester tenants and other neighborhood residents.**
2. Kalorama Road is a very small street with two major apartment buildings and a lot of parking lot traffic in the part of the block in which the Citadel is located. **Locating a significant retail business would provide a major negative impact on our quality of life due to the loading and unloading of trucks throughout the day and/or evening.** Normal vehicular traffic would be disrupted even if loading is done in the building's parking garage or if it is done behind the building. (Currently, delivery trucks serving the Dorchester Market cause occasional congestion and delays. And, the Citadel parking garage is not configured to accommodate delivery trucks.)
3. Locating a supermarket in the Citadel is unnecessary, since an attractive, well-stocked grocery market has been operating in the Dorchester House for more than a decade. Also, there is a sizable Safeway and other stores within few blocks of Kalorama Road, which serve many of this neighborhood's grocery needs. Additionally, there are several ethnic markets on Columbia Road. **The proposed market would unnecessarily over-saturate the supply of groceries**

in this neighborhood. It will also endanger our community-serving local businesses.

4. If another market is located on this block, it would need to attract many additional customers to be viable. Attracting these customers would greatly increase passenger car traffic. **The volume of this traffic and the loading of groceries would put Kalorama Road in a state of constant gridlock.**
5. **A significant increase in the neighborhood's rodent problem will certainly accompany such a large operation.** Over the years the Dorchester Market has been quite conscientious in regard to maintaining a very clean operation, this degree of hygiene does not accompany larger stand-alone grocery stores.

These are a few negative impacts that have been raised in several discussions with my neighbors. The Dorchester Tenants Association would appreciate the opportunity to address this matter more fully in the future.

Please contact me in regard to any other forums or input opportunities that residents might have in regard to this matter and/or other significant changes that might be proposed for this neighborhood. While the local ANC Commissioner, Josh Gibson, knows my address, he has not provided me with any notice regarding this matter.

Also, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need more information regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

Campbell C. Johnson, III
President