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Barbara M. Leach

January 9, 2006

Stephen Mordfin, Development Review Specialist
DC Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 4000
Washington, DC 20002

VIA FAX: 202-442-7637

2006 JAN -9 PM 2:50

DC OFFICE OF ZONING

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Re: Case No. 05-34 – Petition by ANC 6C of
Map Amendment to Square 895, Lot 76

Dear Mr. Mordfin:

I am one of the people who attended the December 19th, 2005, Special Meeting of the Commission. I have lived/owned my home at 610 Constitution Ave., NE on Capitol Hill for more than ten years, and have been a Capitol Hill resident since 1993. As I moved from Iowa to the Washington area in 1989, I cautiously and deliberately sampled various neighborhoods – renting first both inside and outside the District. I chose Capitol Hill specifically because of its historical importance to the nation, and what I hoped were real protections to the neighborhood as offered by the historic neighborhood designation.

I write to express my absolute support for the petition by Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C to have the District of Columbia Zoning Commission approve a proposed amendment to change the zoning classification of Lot 76, Square 895 to R4

As a member in good standing of three neighborhood organizations – the Capitol Hill Coalition for Sensible Development (CHCSD), the Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS), and the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association (SPNA), I can verify that our Capitol Hill neighborhood is unified in its support for the ANC 6C petition. More than 1400 of us originally petitioned the city regarding our concerns, and since then, many of us have worked together continuously and consistently to resolve the very challenging development issue of Lot 76, Square 895 appropriately in a way that would be compatible not only to our immediate neighborhood needs but also to respect our nation's most important neighborhood – the one-of-a-kind historically residential neighborhood surrounding the U.S. Capitol.

As further background, the Capitol Hill neighborhood must be recognized and valued as a unique resource to the nation, not just to those of us who temporarily reside here. Indeed, it should be considered a very serious tragedy that in 1973, when the Capitol Hill Hospital needed to expand, that the neighborhood did not understand how they could answer a very real need for compassion with a one-time "permission," but still hold on to the original zoning by granting a variance or special exception. Their misunderstanding stands today as a continuing and growing tragedy – no longer needed for the original purpose granted, while offering opportunity for the present owner to use it as a cash-cow for his personal purposes. Very sad indeed! ... Not only for us in the neighborhood but also for all of us as a nation.

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District of Columbia

CASE NO. 05-34
EXHIBIT NO. 21

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 05-34
EXHIBIT NO. 21

Thus, this letter is to once again urge you to vote to support the ANC 6C petition because of the following points:

1. A YES VOTE to support the ANC 6C petition supports the general principles of the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan.
2. A YES VOTE to support the ANC 6C petition supports the specific goal of the Comprehensive Plan's intent to protect the architectural character of row house neighborhoods (including the need for new zoning districts and controls against demolition).
3. A YES VOTE to support the ANC 6C petition supports the need for further protection against compounding mistakes, preventing one error in 1973 from escalating into further tragedy.
4. A YES VOTE to support the ANC 6C petition allows Lot 76, Square 895 opportunity for a new beginning, offering the prospect for the block to move in a direction which would be somewhat more compatible to the completely low-rise surrounding neighborhood – mostly 19th century structures.
5. A YES VOTE to support the ANC 6C petition gives respect to the historical nature of the neighborhood, recognizing that a serious mistake was made, and that the city understands the difficulties created by said mistake.

To further clarify my writing, I would also emphasize that I understand, as do my neighbors, that granting the ANC 6C Petition may result in the survival of the existing, inappropriate structure. That said, I most certainly would prefer that to compounding the problem, and recognize that the buildings by simply removing the mid-century banding, could quite easily be adapted to blend in a little better than they do now, while avoiding the major mistake of making the buildings taller, and overall into lesser compliance with the historical demands of the neighborhood.

Finally, may I say that I was very disappointed that somehow the information – about how strongly our neighborhood and its associations support the ANC 6C Petition – was not conveyed to the Board on December 19th. It was not for the lack of our trying to emphasize our support to the Office of Planning. Hopefully, this letter and those of my neighborhood's leadership will help to answer that need. As you know, the duties of both the Office of Planning and the Zoning Commission emphasize priority to District of Columbia residents and the historical nature of our city over the requests of individuals and their developers who sometimes have miss the need to give respect to our neighborhoods, in their quest to fill their own financial coffers.

Very sincerely,



Barbara M. Leach

CC: Chairman Carol J. Mitten (Original Letter)
Vice-Chair Anthony Hood
Commissioner Gregory N. Jeffries
Commissioner Kevin Hildebrand
Commissioner John Parsons

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