



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON, D C 20004

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SHARON AMBROSE
Councilmember-Ward 6

March 22, 2006

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Ms Carol J Mitten, Chair,
and Members of the
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 Fourth St , NW, Suite 210 South
Washington, DC 20001

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

Dear Ms Mitten and Members of the Commission:

As the Councilmember for Ward 6, I am taking this opportunity to comment on the Petition of ANC 6C to amend the zoning on this property from R-5D to R-4. I have received a copy of the Office of Planning Report, recommending that the zoning be amended to R-5B. The present zoning classification of this property is an anomaly that was created 35 years ago to accommodate a community-oriented hospital in the midst of an R-4, C-2 neighborhood in the Capitol Hill Historic District. This zoning classification was an extraordinary exception to the residential, low-rise character of the community that was granted for the **exclusive** purpose of accommodating the needs of a hospital that would serve the surrounding community. That community hospital ceased operations in 1992, and when it did so, the justification for the present zoning classification also ceased to exist.

I agree with both the ANC and the Office of Planning that the current R-5D zoning of the MedLINK property is inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood and should be brought into compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by being rezoned as Moderate Density Residential (R-4, R-5A or R-5B).

For my entire tenure as Ward 6 Councilmember, the MedLINK operations have presented problems and challenges to the community. When I first took office in 1997, the problem of the vacant buildings on the south part of the property was a concern. Since then, we have seen several iterations of the Holladay plan for residential development on the site, and what is now the third version of the Shalom Baranes plan. Each time we seem to have agreement between the community and developer, something happens to undercut that plan, and on the next round we are confronted with a bigger,

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taller, more dense structure The community efforts to promote development of this property in a manner more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood have been sincere and diligent, but unsuccessful. Rezoning of the property to Moderate Density Residential appears to be the only option at this time to insure development that will be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood

Another problem has been the traffic congestion and 14 years of ongoing parking violations on the part of MedLINK's Hospital and Intensive Care Nursing facility, which have imposed an inordinate burden on the surrounding community -- both the surrounding commercial establishments as well as the residents of the area Because of the parking problem, I support a zoning classification that would require a parking ratio of one parking space per residential unit for any new or replacement development on this property

It is my sincere hope that a more realistic and compatible zoning classification of Moderate Density Residential will encourage development of the southern part of this property that has been vacant for so long On the other hand, absent rezoning, the owner might attempt to redevelop the property at a height of 90 feet, which would completely overshadow St James and the 1928 structure and create a massing and density incompatible with the surrounding R-4, C-2 neighborhood Further, any zoning classification that allows less than one parking place per residential unit (and one parking place per hospital bed) imposes an unreasonable burden on the surrounding community

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sharon Ambrose". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sharon" and last name "Ambrose" clearly legible.

Sharon Ambrose,
Councilmember, Ward 6

Cc: Ellen McCarthy, Director, Office of Planning
ANC 6C06 Commissioner Mike Sherman
ANC 6C07 Commissioner Bill Sisolak
Father Downing, St James Episcopal Church
Janet Quigley, CHCSD
Dick Wolf, CHRS
Barry Pershkov, Union Square Homeowners
Monte Edwards, SPNA