

MARY JEAN PAJAK

March 19, 2006

Secretary of the DC Zoning Commission  
Office of Zoning, Suite 210  
441 4th St, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
ATTN: Sharon S. Schellin, Acting Secretary to the Zoning Commission

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RE: Case 05-34, ANC 6C/Medlink, 708 Massachusetts Ave., NE

Dear Ms. Schellin

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed "downzoning" of the property in the subject case. I have been a resident of this area since 1986, and have been residing at 623 Constitution Ave., NE since 2001. Capitol Hill is a wonderful neighborhood to live in. A major downside, however, is the lack of diversity in housing and the increasing rents and property values that place the neighborhood out of reach of a wide variety of city residents. Existing apartment/condominium buildings, such as the nearby Stanton Manor at 644 Massachusetts Ave, NE, contribute to the variety of housing, but there is not enough of this higher density housing to accommodate a variety of income levels and lifestyles.

I believe the proposal for the Medlink site, designed by Shalom Baranes and Associates, would create housing that would be within reach of more people than the downzoning proposals being considered. In addition, this proposal creates a pocket of density that is appropriate in an area that is within reasonable walking distance to 2 Metro stations. This central Metro location is one of the main reasons that my husband and I purchased our house. Further, increased density in appropriate locations could support additional commercial development to serve the neighborhood. The Barracks Row rebirth has added much to Capitol Hill. Eighth Street is a prime candidate for commercial revitalization continuing north to H Street. In my opinion, thoughtful development that increases density and adds commercial services along corridors such as 8th Street adds a great deal to the quality of life. Also, more residents walking in the area increases everyone's safety.

From what I have seen and read about ANC 6C's case, the main issue that is raised is parking. However, most recently, I have read that ANC 6C is supporting a lower density proposal that actually provides a lower ratio of parking to units. Based on this, it does not seem that the vocal minority that has been attempting to eliminate the potential for a great project on this site is mostly concerned with parking. It appears that they would rather see more of the same \$1,000,000+ townhouses with mediocre architectural merit, as were constructed across the street from this site in the late 1990s. Only residents with high enough income levels would purchase these \$1,000,000 townhouses.

The main reason for my letter is to let you know that not everyone in the neighborhood supports the downzoning. People do not move to Capitol Hill to be guaranteed a parking space, but to live in a beautiful, walkable community. Please consider the realities of growth in the region, the high cost of housing in this area, and the fact that additional density inside already developed areas within walking distance to Metro and well served by public transportation is indeed smart growth. You may contact me during the day at (202) 646-2831, or at home at (202) 547-3369. Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely,

  
Mary Jean Pajak

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia