

DC Zoning Commission, May 11, 2006

Madam Chairperson and Commission Members:

My name is Richard Neidich and I live at 929 M Street Northwest, in the District of Columbia. I have lived at this address for eight years, having moved from Capital Hill after residing there for almost 15 years.

My presentation to you tonight is as a representative of the 25 year old Blagden Alley Naylor Court Association and resident of the Blagden Alley/Naylor Court historic district. We are in general support of the proposed amendments and want to thank the Commission and the Office of Planning for providing this opportunity for this brief presentation.

At my current residence, as well as when I lived on Capital Hill, was located in a registered historic district and therefore, I feel that I have more than a passing experience with the issues of density and parking in historic districts.

As you are aware, the Blagden Alley/Naylor Court Historic District is located near Massachusetts Avenue and the DC Convention Center. This historic district was created in 1990 in anticipation of today's development pressures and the many "matter of right" residential buildings that could be built, given the neighborhoods open space and closeness to the downtown business district. This increased residential density, along with the traffic associated with the DC Convention Center, has caused our residents to become quite active in the area of parking issues and enforcement.

The Title 11 District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, Chapter 21 Off-Street Parking Requirements, Section 2100.5 states:

"No additional parking spaces shall be required for a historic landmark or a building or structure located in a historic district that is certified by the State Historic Preservation Officer as contributing to the character of that historic district."

ZONING COMMISSION

CASE No. 06-06 ZONING COMMISSION
EXHIBIT No. 27 District of Columbia
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Therefore, our request to the Commission is that we request, as part of the inclusion of Charter Schools as part of the zoning be associated with Public Schools, make the following additional condition upon the location of charter/public schools, to that stated in Chapter 21, Section 2100.5: Specially we request that **“The provisions of Section 2100.5 do not apply to charter/public schools.”**

To be brief, the waiving of the parking space requirements for schools in historic districts makes the parking problems of historic districts even more acute than they already present to residences, considering historic districts such as ours already has a very limited amount of on street as well as off-street parking.

With respect to new development in our neighborhood, we have been successful with having developers exceed their parking space provisions in our area, primarily due to their economic advantage of having more parking and high demand with a subsequent return on investment. With respect to the creation of a Public School, these economic returns do not exist and therefore, we are concerned that Public Schools will bring parking needs, not solutions.

The need for school staff and students to park near their school location all day and the twice a day demands of a school to support the arrival and departure of students only makes a bad situation significantly worse. We, the residents of Blagden Alley/Naylor Court received at the March 23, 2006 meeting of our ANC, 2F, a unanimously approved resolution requesting the Commission consider parking, among other issues, in formulating regulation of charter schools.

There is a current proposal to locate a 400 student charter school in our neighborhood. This will only make a bad situation the lack of parking even worse. Our neighborhood is not only one with these issues. Other high density historic districts have similar congestion and parking problems. Therefore, we strongly urge the inclusion of this provision as one more method by which we, the residents can, have some influence over our neighborhoods, preserve their historic nature and the quality of life we have as citizens of the District of Columbia.