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Testimony of Andy Litsky
Chairman of ANC-6D
Before the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
Case No. 07-08
Amendment to the Zoning Regulations to Allow Temporary Parking Lots as a
Permitted Use on Specific Squares within CR, W-2, C-3-C, and R-5-B Districts
May 21, 2007

Good evening Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission.

My name is Andy Litsky and I am the vice chairman of ANC-6D, representing the neighborhood in which the baseball stadium is being constructed. I am testifying this evening on behalf of ANC-6D as its authorized representative to the Commission on this matter. At a duly noticed, regularly scheduled meeting on May 14, 2007 of our seven member ANC, at which a quorum was present (four commissioners comprising a quorum) and with all seven members in attendance, we voted 5-0-2 to oppose this amendment to the zoning regulations to allow temporary parking lots as a permitted use on specific squares within CR, W-2, C-3-C, and R-5-B districts.

We urge you to give our concerns great weight.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Given the "emergency" nature of this request, we insist on shorter timeframes for "temporary" parking lots. They ought to be renewed annually or every 2 years, not simply granted access for a five year period until April 1, 2013.
2. The main purpose and goal of the DCSEC Transportation Management Plan *must* be adhered to. Namely: All parties must ensure that **"the Ballpark impacts on Southeast/Southwest DC neighborhoods are minimized."** There should be a clearly articulated plan to reduce vehicular traffic through local neighborhoods. The Zoning Commission needs to insist that DDOT work with the ANC to ensure that local streets – including 4th Street, SW; P Street, SW; and Eye Street, SW have their own traffic mitigation plan so that residents can get in and out of buildings during game days and that patrons directed to these parking lots not be directed to use the above mentioned streets. Barricades should be put in place on these streets as are currently used in residential areas around RFK to protect access to dwellings.
3. The Nationals state that they will assign their baseball season ticket holders parking sites depending upon where they live and where the lots are located. In advance of approval for this zoning request, the Nationals organization must provide that information and, in concert with DDOT, must develop a traffic plan that routes stadium-bound traffic away from the above mentioned residential SW streets.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO.

07-08

EXHIBIT NO.

10

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 07-08
EXHIBIT NO. 10

4. No parking lot would be granted zoning approval until it meets DC storm water management requirements. The health of our Anacostia Watershed demands it.

5. The DC Sports and Entertainment Commission needs to increase the geographic area currently labeled "stadium neighborhood zone." Currently, that zone provides the appearance that the stadium would only minimally impact the Southwest Waterfront neighborhood to the west and close in Capitol Hill. This is a significant understatement of the potential neighborhood spillover problems that will result from the stadium and must be addressed when developing a realistic area-wide parking plan. That zone must be increased to include larger sections of SW.

6. The city should place a surcharge on all parking at these 'temporary' lots & dedicate those monies toward improving neighborhood recreation facilities in Southwest and Near SE.

BACKGROUND

It is well known by this Commission that the commissioners of ANC-6D has been on record as opposing this specific site for the baseball stadium since it was proposed three years ago. But cold reality tells us that in less than 10 months, the structural steel and concrete bleachers that are rising even as we meet tonight will be transformed into a center where 41,000 people will gather on evenings just such as this 81 times a year. While many in SW now embrace the stadium and the benefits that it will bring the city, it is quite clear that that affection has neither been returned by the DCSEC, a number of city agencies nor the Nationals organization. And my community of 13,000 residents – which will see an increase of close to 2,700 housing units within the next two and half years – will be under siege by thousands of Virginia and Maryland stadium bound drivers directed to the very parking lots under consideration this evening.

The most significant concern that we have about this plan is that at all steps along the way, our community had been told that the stadium plans would protect our community. Now, we find that those assurances – verbal and written – were baseless. Because in the headlong effort to get this stadium built, certain assurances are pushed aside in the name of expediency. It is very clear, in our conversations with DCSEC and their traffic consultant, Gorove-Slade, that they plan to route traffic through residential Southwest. If these lots are given temporary sanction, this will virtually guarantee a never-ending traffic snarl that'll give Southwesterners The National Marathon experience 81 days a year. And that's because the most direct routes to a majority of these lots are over streets that serve as the only automobile access for thousands of residents in Southwest to get to their homes.

The Ballpark Environmental Mitigation Study, prepared for the DCSEC in February, 2006, was created as one of two base documents providing the foundation for the TOPP. The document was prepared in February, 2006. After constant inquiry, ANC-6D received a copy of the report a year later, in March, 2007. Here are some selected items

from that document that have provided ANC-6D with bases for opposing these amendments.

Traffic System Impacts

"Planning for the Ballpark is being coordinated with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation. The Ballpark is designed to be sensitive to nearby residents and minimize traffic conflicts between Ballpark patrons and neighborhood residents. A Traffic Operations Parking Plan for the Ballpark (TOPP) will include mitigation measures to protect the neighborhood from game day cut-through traffic (through placement of traffic control officers, physical barriers or other measures agreed to by the community." Page ES-14

It is quite clear that at least two of the parking lots located on Squares 660 and 665 would be most easily accessible by using Fourth Street, south of M to P Street, SW to Buzzard Point. This would carry more than 1,200 cars each game over local streets, in direct contravention of what had been stated in the Ballpark EMS. This route would very probably be followed were there to be approval for the 500 potential parking spots to be located at Squares 707, 708, 708E, and 708S.

Additionally, at a recent public meeting Lou Slade of Gorove-Slade stated clearly that the TOPP supported the notion that traffic would also be directed along Eye Street, SW from the SW/SE Expressway through neighborhood streets to South Capitol. This contention appeared to be supported by DDOT. It was clearly stated that stadium-bound automobile traffic would be directed in this manner. And access to the temporary lots that would be located on Squares 767, 768, and 769, bringing an additional 400 cars would most likely require through traffic to travel over this portion of residential SW during each game.

Further, at the recent DCSEC unveiling of their TOPP, Mr. Slade characterized the Baseball Traffic Operations Plan as "organized chaos." This is hardly the kind of activity we need traversing residential Southwest.

Parking System Impacts

"... Off-street parking provided for baseball patrons would be spread throughout various facilities in locations that are within reasonable walking distance to the Ballpark, accessible from arterial streets, and within commercial areas. The locations and routing of vehicles to these facilities would be selected so as not to encroach upon neighborhood areas, in particular the community west of the Ballpark site across South Capitol Street." Page ES-15

Again, the statement provides little comfort and less security. For at the public unveiling of the TOPP in April, 2007, DDOT made it clear that they labeled what residents had heretofore considered local streets – Eye Street, SW; Fourth Street, SW; and P Street, SW as "arterial streets, not local streets." This was news to us. **These streets are the sole method of accessing our homes and parking areas for thousands of residents of Tiber Island Cooperative Homes, Tiber Island Condominiums, Harbour Square Cooperative Homes, Carrollsburg a Condominium, Riverside Condominium,**

Edgewater Condominiums, and a large number of residents at Riverside Cooperative Homes. If that's not local what is?

Air Quality Impacts

"... Long-term operational emissions would be almost exclusively generated through vehicular traffic for baseball game events." Page ES-17

So, of course, that's the argument for routing stadium-bound vehicular traffic directly through residential SW.

Noise Impacts

".....Noise levels in existing residential areas west of South Capitol Street would not be expected to increase as a result of activity at the Ballpark. Overall, residences less than two blocks away from the Ballpark site would be subject to variable noise levels from a variety of sources, including construction activities and equipment, the vehicular movement of event attendees, event crowd cheering, and the public address system. An increase in ballgame-generated traffic would be expected on game days, which would generate traffic-related noise. Ballgame noise levels would be particularly noticeable on minor roadways in the vicinity of the Ballpark after 10:00pm on a weeknight" Page ES 16

The report speaks only of existing residential areas within a two block zone. It follows, then, that any areas outside of that zone would remain basically free of noise. Clearly, if up to 1,700 cars leave the temporary parking areas and make their way down P and Fourth to M Street, noise concerns will have a significantly deleterious effect on quality of life for people in the area, as well as decreased property values as a result.

Hazardous Materials Impacts:

It is quite clear that the stadium is located on ground that soil and groundwater contaminants. This may also hold for at least four of the Squares under consideration for temporary lots. PCBs, solvents, petroleum products and more are very possibly located at the Florida Rock site. ANC 6D is concerned changing zoning regulations now, before such environmental studies are done, would create a danger to the fragile environment of the Anacostia Watershed. Check first. Build later.

The Transportation Management Plan (TMP) was the second major document that was the foundation for the TOPP. It was produced in April, 2006. After constant inquiry, the DCSEC finally presented ANC-6D with copies of this document a year later, in March, 2007.

That document presents clearly its purpose and goal. It reads:

Purpose and Goal of the TMP

"The purpose and goal of this TMP is to describe the actions required to ensure that the Ballpark has excellent access for all modes of transportation and that the networks and services continue to function for commuters, neighborhood residents and businesses, and other travelers on days when there are games played at the Ballpark. The goals of the TMP are to:

- 1) Ensure that the Ballpark traffic impacts on the Southeast/Southwest DC neighborhoods are minimized; and**
- 2) Provide a high level of service to Ballpark patrons at a reasonable cost."**

It is quite clear that this first goal in the TMP has never been predominant as anything other than a sedative for the residents of Southwest. It is not worth the paper it's written on.

The manner in which my Southwest community has been treated by city agencies during this entire stadium planning and construction process bears remarkable resemblance to that old saw of how you boil a frog. You do it slowly. You don't put him in a pot of hot water -- for he'll jump right out. In order to boil a frog successfully, you have to make him comfortable. You do it very slowly, turning up the heat by degrees. Soon, he'll be lulled by the warmth. Then, he'll go to sleep. And the next thing you know, you've got yourself a boiled frog.

Well, Commissioners, that's the same situation we have right here. DCSEC, Planning and DDOT would never have broached this subject of temporary lots earlier on. They never would have said that stadium-directed traffic would be directed, instead, through SW residential streets. Instead they waited until it was clear that the Nationals needed this zoning change to accommodate their season ticket holders. In fact, when we pointed out in previous ANC Zoning testimony our concern about unarticulated off-site parking, during the intervening months, OP never engaged us in any discussion about how this request would come forward. Again, boiling the frog slowly -- and unexpectedly.

The plans to rezone these 13 lots are not, in and of themselves, as objectionable as the manner in which drivers who will be accessing these lots will be directed to get to them. At present, if plans move forward, these lots will block our residential streets, prevent access to our homes, create significant unnecessary noise, and heighten safety concerns for parents whose children play on those streets and pedestrians and bikers who will be utilizing the Anacostia River Trail along P Street, SW and through Buzzard Point.

ANC-6D contends that the health, safety and the quality of life of our current 12,000 residents – with half again as many to be living here within the next decade – matter more than parking privileges for baseball patrons holding luxury boxes and season tickets.

ANC-6D requests that these 13 parcels not be approved as temporary parking lots and we ask that you give great weight to our concerns.

Attached to this testimony is a selection of letters and e-mails from local residents that had been sent to the ANC regarding this case.

Dear Mr. Litsky,

On behalf of all of the residents at Edgewater Condominiums (400 - 410 O Street SW) allow me to express our collective concerns about the increased automobile traffic the proposed temporary ball park parking areas will impose on 4th Street SW. In addition to the current increase we are experiencing with dump trucks involved in the ball park construction, we will experience traffic from the forthcoming waterfront mall destruction and rebuild. For the most part, the additional noise and pollution experienced is confined to daylight hours. The ballpark parking lot(s) will just extend the problems until well into the evening hours and on weekends.

You are already aware of the large majority of adverse noise issues and criminal activity we experience with the added traffic on weekend nights surrounding the waterfront nightclubs. Please impress on the zoning commission how little we desire an expansion of these type problems with the proposed parking lots. Routing the traffic down 4th St. SW to P St. SW will also bring these activities directly to our properties.

Another issue is that there is a shortage of street parking already. Folks attending the games will undoubtedly park on our streets to avoid paying the parking lot fees.

Keeping the traffic routed on M St. SW and South Capitol St. is appropriate for all of the future ball park activities.

Thomas R. Davidson
President, Edgewater Condominiums

Andy,

As a seven year resident of SW, I am totally opposed to locating 13 surface lots such that it is guaranteed that traffic will be directed through our side streets.

It is unconscionable that this would happen. Our is a vibrant neighborhood with an expanding number of young families with children. Additionally, the people who live east of Fourth Street cross that street in large numbers to be able to take advantage of the waterfront promenade and park land. How are they going to manage that with hordes of cars racing to get parking before a game? Children ride their tricycles up and down the sidewalks of Fourth Street. It's just going to take one three year old running out into the street after a ball to have a tragedy. Baseball is a summer pastime when people want to be outside and enjoying our neighborhood. We should not force traffic down residential streets for the convenience of the owners of the Nationals. They must find a better way to do this.

Have they ever visited Baltimore's stadium to look at the traffic? Baltimore places strict restrictions on traffic on side streets, thanks to the grassroots work of the various neighborhoods there. If you walk from Camden Yards down to the Inner Harbor, you will find NO stadium traffic during game days.

The District owes us no less.

Sincerely,

Linda Chandlee
Harbour Square Cooperative

——Original Message——

From: [rwilkins@](#)

To: [alitsky@aol.com](#)

Sent: Fri, 18 May 2007 11:52 AM

Subject: New Parking Lots Will Flood Local SW Streets with Stadium Bound Drivers

Andy, I support your position whole-heartedly. My guess is that 82 times a year Maine, M, 4th and P will be semi-parking lots because most cars won't be able to move.

Roger Wilkins

Dear Commissioner Litsky:

I would like for you to add my comments to your testimony of the DC Zoning Commission concerning the "Temporary" parking lots (zoning commission case #07-08 as presented to the ANC6d this past Monday evening. I was present at your meeting and had to move up to the front of the room in order to fully appreciate the ludicrous location of the proposed parking lots.

First, at least 3 of the lots appear to be almost directly on the banks of the Anacostia, one of the most polluted rivers in the US that is supposed to be on the high priority list to clean up by the AWC and this administration. I can't imagine that the office of planning is not aware of the pollutants that run off parking lots and streets, directly into the river that is supposed to be targeted for cleanup.

Secondly, the neighborhood that is affected the most by these lots is a neighborhood that currently has access to limited consumer services and the added traffic will make it that much more difficult to get around. Further, the traffic will most likely "lock" in an area that is already isolated from the rest of the city.

What is wrong with using the Navy Yard's parking or the USDOT parking or the SEFC parking or any of the other numerous "daytime" lots? There is absolutely no reason to having lots west of South Capitol St when there appears to be plenty of areas closer to the ball park east of South Capitol. All you have to do is make arrangements with those area to have spaces for game night/day.

Environmentally and logistically, this plan should be scrapped immediately. Furthermore, there should be a thoughtful approach to the river you are trying to clean-up and the people who live on and around it. Is it too much to ask to have some type of offsite parking and shuttle buses bringing people to the stadium? I am truly dumbfounded.

Sincerely,

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Edward J. Johnson

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May 21, 2007

Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia

Testimony re: ZC Case 07-08, Temporary Parking within the CG Overlay Presented by Edward J. Johnson

As a former ANC Commissioner for ANC 6D, I want to first express my full support for the position taken by the ANC to oppose the construction of 13 temporary surface parking lots to be located in Southwest and Near SE to accommodate baseball patron season ticket holders.

In addition, as a 16 year resident of near Southwest, I have seen an incremental decrease in the quality of life for Southwest residents because of decisions exactly like this one before you today. As just one example, in order to accommodate the Odyssey cruise line, approximately 1/3 of the Gangplank marina parking lot was given over for its exclusive use. Consequently, the National Capital Revitalization Corporation then limited the number of boat slips available for residential use citing a lack of parking as a reason. We now have at least 35 fewer affordable homes in Southwest.

Each time a decision to favor commercial uses over residential uses is enacted, the neighborhoods 'take a hit' and I have yet to see the Zoning Commission or any other DC Agency step up and require a community benefit commensurate with the loss to business interests, and this is no exception.

As Zoning Commissions charged with preserving the integrity of our city's neighborhoods, I can't see how, in good faith, you could approve this case when there is absolutely no rationale for how it will not further degrade the quality of life for thousands of residents.

Thank You,

[signed]

Edward J. Johnson

Riverside Condominium

**1425 - 1435 4th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024**

May 20, 2007

**Mr. Andy Litsky
Commissioner, ANC-6D-04**

Dear Mr. Andy Litsky,

As President of the Riverside Condominium I strongly support the ANC-6D vote on Monday night that opposed the construction of 13 temporary surface parking lots to be located in Southwest and Near SE to accommodate baseball patron season ticket holders. It is our fear that those lots (temporary for a period of five years) will necessitate stadium bound drivers to travel through our neighborhood using local streets in order to get to those lots. This will make it virtually impossible to access our property 81 days out of the year!

I understand it was at the recent public meeting unveiling the DC Sports Commission's traffic and parking plan (TOPP) when the DCSEC traffic consultant, under intense questioning, finally admitted that contrary to the pledges that had been made in previous Community Leader Meetings and documents he'd prepared with DC Department of Planning and DC Department of Transportation, drivers will be *specifically* directed through local streets to the stadium. The construction of these lots makes it a virtual certainty that this will establish a pattern of use that will be anything but temporary.

The Supplemental Report that was prepared by Planning to the Zoning Commission in support of their recommendation includes a map of the proposed sites – two of which are on Buzzard Point and virtually guarantee neighborhood 'through' access along Fourth and P Streets, SW.

Please represent Riverside Condominium a community of over 400 DC citizens along with the thousands of other residents that live on 4th Street and oppose the designation of 4th street as a route to the Stadium parking.

Sincerely,



**Stephen Roberts
President, Riverside Condominiums**