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CASE NO. 08-06-2

(Comprehensive Zoning Regulations Rewrite: Parking)

Testimony of Alma Hardy Gates, ANC 3D05

Thursday, July 31, 2008

In Aristotle's *The Politics* we find the following quote: "Equality of possessions may exist and yet the level be fixed either too high, with resultant luxury, or too low which leads to a life of penury. It is clear, therefore, that it is not enough for a legislator to equalize possessions: he must aim at fixing an amount midway between extremes."¹

And so the Office of Planning comes to advise the Zoning Commission on an amount of parking that meets the needs of current residential neighborhoods as well as the needs of those coming in vehicles, on bicycles, and on foot while preserving an appropriate amount of greenspace. This is no easy task as these divergent needs have created the push and pull that accompany change, especially in Metrocentric neighborhoods throughout the city.

Let me remind the members of the Zoning Commission that in January of this year, approval was granted for the Consolidated Approval for a Planned Unit Development and Zoning Map Amendment for Sibley Memorial Hospital that includes a medical office building and a 750 space above ground parking garage. This amount of parking was granted to prevent spillover parking on neighborhood streets.

Turning your attention to Transit Oriented Development areas around Metro stops where a number of new buildings in the same block would exceed both the density and intensity Sibley proposed. In the scenario OP presents under proposed minimum parking requirements found in section P.2.1 for low Density Residential Districts (currently R-1, & R-2) only 105 parking spaces would be recommended for the Sibley MOB. The 645 spaces that would be eliminated under this OP proposal would certainly result in spillover parking on the residential streets that surround Sibley.

Another observation found under P.3, Flexibility in Parking Requirements, is extremely troubling. Sections P.3.2 through P.3.4 are ripe for all kinds of irregularities as well as lacking the requirement for sufficient review. No examination has been done by OP on whether or not what is being proposed is sufficient to mitigate the harm to neighborhoods from parking spillover. P.3.2 does not offer District residents an opportunity to present their concerns, but rather leaves all decision making in the outstretched hands of DDOT. Surely, the Zoning Commission would not approve the opportunity for DDOT to accept payments in lieu of requirements.

One intent of the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Regulations is to ensure neighborhood stabilization. What is being proposed does not meet that intent. I strongly urge the Zoning Commission to return the parking rewrite to OP and the Task Force for further study.

¹ 1985, Penguin Classics. Saunders, Trevor J. Aristotle *The Politics*.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

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EXHIBIT NO. 15
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FAX COVER SHEET

TO: Sharon Schellin
FROM: Alma Gates
DATE: July 28, 2008
RE: Testimony for Case 08-06-2 (Parking)
PAGES: 2, including cover sheet

Thank you Sharon.