

Daniella Gibbs Leger

Testimony before the zoning commission re: property 2911 Rhode Island Avenue Northeast
February 5, 2015

Good evening. My name is Daniella Gibbs Leger, and I want to thank you for allowing me to speak before you today. I am the vice chair of the Rhode Island Avenue Main Street, but today I am testifying in my personal capacity as the resident whose house is most directly impacted by this development. I reside at 3038 Monroe Street and this property would be right next to 2 sides of my house.

I believe that Rhode Island Avenue is on the cusp of fully realizing its great potential. And I understand that development and density on the Avenue are needed to help attract the businesses the community desires. And I also want to thank Zack for reaching out to me to discuss my concerns with the project. I am in favor with developing this lot. That said I do have some concerns, some issues that were raised at the last ANC 5C meeting. And I hope that before the zoning amendment is approved, we can get some guarantees that these issues will be addressed. None of these are a surprise to Zack, as I've talked to him about them.

Part of this development sits on Monroe Street. That is a completely residential, single family home block. We would want to make sure that the part of the development that faces Monroe Street actually looks like Monroe Street, and doesn't dwarf my house and all the houses around it.

My biggest concern with Monroe Street involves parking. Right now, people park in front of their homes usually with few issues. However, even with expanded parking in the building, this apartment complex would no doubt make it hard for me or my neighbors to park near our homes. Right now there is parking on both sides of the street past the alley, but hardly anyone parks on the side opposite my house because Monroe Street is incredibly narrow and effectively becomes a one lane road when cars are parked on both sides. There have been many a side-swiped car. In addition, the developer has said that the entrance to the parking in the complex will be off Monroe Street in the alley next to my house. I think this is a terrible idea; the alley is narrow as it is and not conducive to in and out traffic; coming out of that alley onto Monroe is a bit of a blind spot when cars are parked, and currently, coming off RIA onto Monroe can be tricky because of the cars parked up by the light. Adding that much additional traffic to that one half block could spell a disaster. ANC 5C said a traffic study must be done, and I completely agree.

The other issues are structural in nature, as in the structure of my and my neighbors' 1915 homes. As discussed at the ANC meeting, we need to make sure that our homes are protected from any potential damage to our foundations and physical property from the construction, and that any damage is remedied quickly.

And generally speaking, I would want to make sure that the neighborhood is kept up to speed on what is happening. I dropped of some letters to my neighbors about this and they were unaware of what was happening.

So, in the end, I would support this development, but with the caveats I laid out below. If we can ensure that the entrance to parking is on RIA and the other concerns are met, I will give this amendment request my full support.