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3051 Chancellor's Way NE  
Washington, DC 20017

Dec 2, 2016

Chairman Anthony J. Hood  
Washington DC Zoning Commission  
441 4th Street NW Suite 200S  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: DC Zoning Commission Case 15-02

Dear Chairman Hood,

I am unable to attend the meeting scheduled for 15 Dec as I am in Europe on business. Instead, I am writing to strongly oppose the planned townhouse development at 3100 7<sup>th</sup> Street NE by the Applicant. There are several reasons why I oppose this development.

### **Paucity of Green Space in Upper NE, Especially in Edgewood community**

Our city has adopted various legislation aimed at assuring that preserving green space is a centrally important consideration for the future. One example of this is the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital (<https://www.ncpc.gov/compplan/>), the District's strategic plan for future development, which specifically prioritizes converting institutional property in Edgewood into park space. The goals set forth in that plan will be unattainable if existing parcels of green space are individually picked off for development.

The city is aware of the lack of green space in Upper NE and has prioritized the development/maintenance of community parks. “. . . much of Upper Northeast is starved for public parkland. More active recreational areas, playgrounds, athletic fields, and traditional neighborhood parks are needed. . . There are also concerns that the large institutional open spaces—particularly the great lawns and wooded glades of the area’s religious orders—may someday be lost to development. These properties are important to the health of the community and should be considered as opportunities for new neighborhood and community parks”.

The city has also prescribed a plan for accomplishing this: “In the event that large institutional uses are redeveloped in the future, pursue opportunities to dedicate substantial areas as new neighborhood parks and open spaces.” More specifically Action UNE-1.2.A Parkland Acquisition states that the city should “Address the shortage of parkland in the Planning Area, placing a priority on the areas with the most severe deficiencies. According to the 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, these areas include **Edgewood** . . . “(Comprehensive Plan for the Nation's Capitol)

How can the development of the Holy Redeemer property be approved when Edgewood is specifically named in the Comprehensive Plan as deficient in green space and where acquisition of institutional properties such as the Redemptorist property should be prioritized and not lost to development?

### **Loss of Tree Canopy**

Science has shown that green spaces are key to a sustainable future and community health, especially in urban areas where the existing green spaces are historically limited. Green spaces improve the psychological and social health of residents. Trees reduce particulate pollution and CO<sub>2</sub> in the air, thereby improving air quality as well as reducing stormwater runoff.

The portion of the Holy Redeemer property that is proposed for development contains more than 18 Special Trees (circumferences of more than 44 inches). According to the 2 certified arborists who visited this site, the trees on the property likely date from the building of Holy Redeemer College in the 1930s. That means these magnificent mature trees are more than 70 years old. It is unlikely that the canopy that these trees provide will be replaced.

According to Casey Trees there are only 3 other wards in the District which have less tree canopy than Ward 5, in which the Edgewood community is located. We cannot afford to eliminate

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canopy than Ward 5, in which the Edgewood community is located. We cannot afford to eliminate the existing canopy for 21 townhouses. This will not help the city achieve it's goal of 40% tree canopy by 2032.

**Penalization of the District's Poorer Residents**

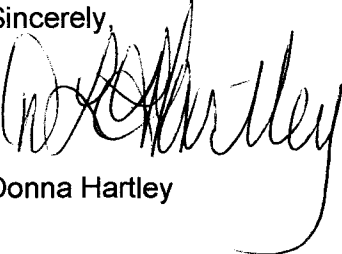
Making up for the loss of these existing green spaces in a manner that doesn't disproportionately affect poorer neighborhoods like Edgewood is not in consideration. Poorer neighborhoods in the District already suffer less tree canopy than richer neighborhoods ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/environmentalists-face-challenges-trying-to-plant-in-less-green-neighborhoods/2013/04/25/21294968-ad27-11e2-a198-99893f10d6dd\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.0cd8c9149da1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/environmentalists-face-challenges-trying-to-plant-in-less-green-neighborhoods/2013/04/25/21294968-ad27-11e2-a198-99893f10d6dd_story.html?utm_term=.0cd8c9149da1)). Therefore, if these projects proceed, Edgewood will be placed yet further behind in efforts towards becoming a healthy sustainable community.

**Development Consideration Out of Context**

It is important that in all aspects of local government, the goals set out to protect green space not be overridden at the zoning level. Neighborhoods must be considered in their entirety, and not just parcel-by-parcel. Yet unrestrained piecemeal development is threatening the very limited existing green space in Edgewood and in Ward 5 generally. All existing green spaces must be considered in their local context, or entire communities will lose access.

I urge the Zoning Commission to oppose the development of the existing Holy Redeemer green space with its numerous magnificent Special Trees, and assure that the Comprehensive Plan is followed. Let's continue to advance toward the District's Tree Canopy goal and support our poorer neighborhoods with nearby green spaces as provided for in the District's strategic plan for development. This will have a positive impact on the city's residents far into the future.

Sincerely,



Donna Hartley