

**TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM CLARKSON
CO-PRESIDENT, SPRING VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
BEFORE
THE ZONING COMMISSION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN
Z.C. CASE NO. 16-23**

JANUARY 7, 2019

Chairman Hood and Commissioners, my name is William Clarkson, and I am testifying on behalf of the Spring Valley Neighborhood Association (“SVNA”). SVNA supports Valor Development’s revised project proposal currently under consideration, and we appreciate the opportunity to participate as a party in this important case.

SVNA is comprised of residents of the Spring Valley, the neighborhood directly across Massachusetts Avenue from the proposed Lady Bird development. We would like to reiterate to the Commission that SVNA does not include in its membership all residents of Spring Valley (See Exhibit 222). Our Association has over 200 members, as well as hundreds of neighbors involved in SVNA’s community activities and initiatives, and we consider ourselves an active, engaged, and growing group of Spring Valley neighbors who support responsible development and positive growth.

We believe that the proposed project will have an overall positive impact on the community, especially with the return of a full-service grocery store. This particular element of the project has received significant community support from neighborhood residents and their elected representatives on Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (“ANCs”) 3D and 3E. As stated in the Office of Planning’s January 2 report, “A matter-of-right residential building could be built to the property line along both Yuma and 48th Streets and could measure 50 feet in height” (Exhibit 266). It is our understanding that Valor or another developer could have chosen to pursue a matter-of-right, residential-only development project, which would have eliminated the need to work with the affected ANCs and the opportunity for the significant, meaningful community review and input that has occurred on this project since September 2015. Instead, Valor recognized the community’s strong desire for a grocery store to return to the vacant SuperFresh/Fresh and Green’s site, and we agree with the Office of Planning’s own conclusion that, “The proposed project would result in a development that would be superior to any matter of-right development on the site” (Exhibit 266).

While we understand and appreciate neighbors’ concerns about the potential negative impacts which could result from the current proposal, we believe that Valor has made a concerted, good faith effort to address issues and concerns raised by community stakeholders, the affected ANCs, and D.C. government agencies. According to its December 31 submission to the Commission (Exhibit 268), it appears that Valor has engaged in over 50 meetings with these various stakeholders, including both opposing and supporting parties. Just last week, the parties participated in a “walk-through” of

Valor's proposed alley system with District Department of Transportation Director Marootian and his staff.

As a result of this engagement and the feedback received, Valor has made a number of positive changes to the proposed project. Most notably, the revised plans include a larger 18,000 square foot full-service grocery store, while reducing the gross floor area of the project by over 40,000 square feet. Valor's revised plans have been endorsed by the Office of Planning, and after analyzing the potential traffic and parking impacts of the project, the DC Department of Transportation has stated that it has no objection to the approval of Valor's design review application.

I would also like to note that, for those of us who attend the monthly ANC 3D meetings, it is clear that our elected representatives have devoted a significant amount of time and effort to this case, and we would like to thank the ANC 3D leadership, particularly Commissioners Gardner, Elkins, and Kravitz, for keeping our community informed and allowing community members' voices to be heard at these meetings, including those of our neighbors in AU Park.

All of us are here tonight because we care deeply about our community and recognize the importance of participating in this process. We appreciate the Commission's consideration of our testimony and would be happy to answer any questions.