

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Bardin, Sara (DCOZ)
Sent: Monday, January 8, 2018 3:31 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: FW: 3101 Albemarle Street, NW -- Comments on the PUD dated November 20, 2017. Comments by Shilpa Patel and Jean-Jacques Dethier, 3051 Albemarle St NW

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Sara Bardin

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From: Andrew Orlin [mailto:andreworlin@starpower.net]
Sent: Monday, January 8, 2018 3:00 PM
To: commissioners@anc3f.com; DickinsonANC3F@gmail.com; Adelstein, Shirley (SMD 3F02) <3F02@anc.dc.gov>; Rutenberg, Naomi (SMD 3F03) <3F03@anc.dc.gov>; brownANC3F@gmail.com; amolod58@gmail.com; Sittig, William (SMD 3F06) <3F06@anc.dc.gov>; pat.jacopchek@gmail.com; ATD DCOZ <dcoz@dc.gov>; Planning <Planning@dc.gov>
Cc: dethierjj@gmail.com; spatel3051@gmail.com; Jane McDonald <jmd8784@gmail.com>; 'Bobby Gottfried' <rgottfried@gmail.com>; 'PG Gottfried' <PAULEN1400@AOL.COM>
Subject: RE: 3101 Albemarle Street, NW -- Comments on the PUD dated November 20, 2017. Comments by Shilpa Patel and Jean-Jacques Dethier, 3051 Albemarle St NW

Dear ANC Commissioners and DC Government officials:

Jean-Jacques Dethier forwarded to me the email, below, that he sent you earlier today with respect to the PUD, dated November 20, 2017, from Soapstone Valley Ventures.

I live at 3015 Albemarle Street, the fourth house up from the 3101 Albemarle Street property.

I believe that the points made in Mr. Dethier's email are very well stated and I very much support them. I would urge that the proposed PUD not be approved at this time and that more effort and discussion be undertaken to find a solution that would be more acceptable to all parties in the neighborhood.

Regards,

Andrew Orlin and
Jane McDonald
3015 Albemarle Street,
Washington, DC 20008

From: Jean J Dethier <dethierjj@gmail.com>

**Subject: 3101 Albemarle Street, NW -- Comments on the PUD dated November 20, 2017.
Comments by Shilpa Patel and Jean-Jacques Dethier, 3051 Albemarle St NW**

Date: January 8, 2018 at 12:35:47 PM EST

To: commissioners@anc3f.com, DickinsonANC3F@gmail.com, 3F02@anc.dc.gov, Naomi Rutenberg <3F03@anc.dc.gov>, brownANC3F@gmail.com, amolod58@gmail.com, 3F06@anc.dc.gov, pat.jacopchek@gmail.com, dcoz@dc.gov, planning@dc.gov

Cc: Shilpa Patel <spatel3051@gmail.com>, Bobby Gottfried <rgottfried@gmail.com>, PG Gottfried <PAULEN1400@AOL.COM>

TO: Zoning Commission, DC Office of Zoning
DC Office of Planning
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3F

Dear Sir / Madam,

We would like to go on record with these comments on the PUD dated November 20, 2017 sent to us by Bobby Gottfried of Soapstone Valley Ventures LLC.

First of all, we would like to say that we are not at all happy with the prospect of potential construction at 3101 Albemarle St NW. We are the immediate neighbors of the property. We purchased our house (in year 2000) with the understanding that, across the street, was Soapstone Valley and, next to us, was a private park— giving a pleasant wooded aspect to this “green area” neighborhood with detached houses, which is the intent of those who conceived Forest Hills.

That being said, we understand that there has to be urban development and that the city needs revenue. Since the property consisted of two lots, we initially thought that one new detached single-family house would be constructed to respect the neighborhood’s character and that the existing mansion would be refurbished. Furthermore, the city would gain since both properties would now generate tax revenue (compared to the previous situation when the property belonged to Poland). Instead, we are being presented with a high-density development that will irrevocably change the character of the neighborhood.

On April 27, 2017, DC’s Historic Preservation Review Board awarded historic landmark status to the 1926 Colonial Revival stone house (“Mansion”) located high on the hill at the corner of 32nd Street (with address 3101 Albemarle Street) but not to the park around it. The *Forest Hills Connection* says that the house, which sits among mature trees and overlooks the entrance to Soapstone Valley, is often referred to as “the gateway to Forest Hills.” We find it very strange that a historic building would become a ‘landmark’ but that the park around it, which gives it its character, would be excluded.

One major concern with the Mansion is the pond at the bottom of the hill adjacent to Albemarle Street. As we have repeatedly pointed out, given the topology of the site, this pond serves a major storm water drainage function for the Mansion and surrounding areas. It becomes a source of stagnant water after a rainfall, and thus rampant breeding ground for mosquitoes. We understand that Soapstone Valley Ventures intends to convert this pond into a “rain garden” to enhance storm water management. However, no details on this very important environmental feature are presented in the PUD nor disclosed in previous meetings and presentations, despite requests voiced in person to the developers, as well as in public at neighborhood and ANC meetings. Who is responsible for creating this rain garden? When will it be constructed? Who will be responsible for maintaining it?

The new construction proposal of Soapstone Valley Ventures calls for a very high-density development and tries to cram into this space a large number of houses. The houses are very close to the street, with virtually no setback. We do not think that this

is an appropriate entry to Forest Hills and is certainly in contradiction with the original intent when the neighborhood was built. It is, furthermore, an insult to the landmark building which would now be surrounded by six houses that will strangle it.

Furthermore, much zoning relief is being requested from the authorities, inter alia, waiver of minimum land requirement, lot development standards, setback requirements, lot width area, side yard and front setbacks – all features that exist to protect and maintain the character of the neighborhood and the zoning under which it is developed. We understand that Soapstone Valley Ventures can, by right, build two detached, single-family homes on the site in addition to the existing Mansion. This would be more in keeping with the character of the neighborhood and would triple the housing stock (and potential for taxes) on the property. This can take place without any need for rezoning of the property.

In exchange for this relief, Soapstone Valley Ventures promises some public benefits. The PUD presents the development of row houses as one such public benefit, on the grounds that it would help neighborhood residents downsize and age in place. Several apartment buildings – including a brand new development less than a block away – already exist to provide living options for seniors who wish to downsize while remaining in the neighborhood. We do not find any public benefit of row houses in a neighborhood that is designed for detached single-family homes. We also question the value of providing a small public green space in this location given that Soapstone Valley Park, with several acres of natural woodland just across the street, and the urban playground/green space on Brandywine Street, a block away, already exist to provide such public gathering places.

We have made several attempts to convey our concerns about this high-density development, and to ask Soapstone Valley Ventures to consider more fully other options (such as the building of detached, single family homes) on the site. Despite some reductions to the height and built area of the row houses from a previous version, the current PUD remains unchanged in scope and substance in that it continues to call for high-density development.

PG and Bobby are our neighbors and we do not wish to cause them undue hardship. By the same token, we hope that they extend the same consideration to us who are their immediate neighbors. We would very much like to find a solution here that can work for all parties and, in that spirit, we remain open to discussion.

Regards,

Shilpa Patel
and Jean-Jacques Dethier
3051 Albemarle Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008