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VIA IZIS

Zoning Commission for the
District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW - Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: ZC Case No. 18-02 / Request for Emergency Rulemaking

Dear Members of the Commission:

This letter is submitted in support of the above-referenced application; specifically, the Applicant's request that the proposed text amendments be adopted on an emergency basis. We submit that adopting the proposed text amendments on an emergency basis is in the interest of the public welfare.

As noted in the Office of Planning ("OP") memo, according to a 2015 *Washington Post* report, the number of dog licenses in the District more than doubled in a two-year period between 2013 and 2015 and, thus, demand for veterinary services is increasing. Ostensibly, the increased demand correlates with the District's residential population, which continues to grow at an average monthly rate of 803 residents.

A significant percentage of the District's population lives in mixed use buildings. In fact, a large percentage of the new residential units in the District that have been constructed over the past 20 years are housed in mixed use buildings. Allowing veterinary services in mixed use buildings, as a special exception, would bring the use closer to the residents and their animals living in the moderate to high density neighborhoods throughout the city and, as a result, reduce travel time to the veterinarian. In some cases, this will also eliminate the need to use private vehicles to transport animals to the veterinarian. These outcomes advance the District's planning policies. Also, additional locations would increase the number of veterinary facilities, which would help meet demand from the increasing number of people and dogs and other pets in the District.

If the proposed text amendments are not adopted on an emergency basis, it will be approximately two years, at the earliest, before a veterinary use can open in a mixed use building, unless a property meets the criteria for a variance and barring any appeal of the approval. This is an exceptionally long time given the rapidly growing population of people and pets in the District.

The Zoning Commission adopted the text amendments proposed in Zoning Commission Case 05-21, relating to animal boarding, on an emergency basis. In doing so, the Zoning Commission noted that making animal boarding uses immediately unavailable to District residents would cause public hardship and inconvenience and potentially impact public safety if owners cannot find a place to board their dogs. The same argument is true if there are not opportunities to open veterinary hospitals throughout the District's moderate to high density neighborhoods, within a reasonable time frame.

Thank you for your considerate attention to this matter. We remain hopeful of the Commission's favorable review of this application.

Sincerely,

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP



Leila M. Jackson Batties, Esq.

cc: Ms. Jennifer Steingasser, Office of Planning (via email)
Mr. Joel Lawson, Office of Planning (via email)
Mr. Stephen Mordfin, Office of Planning (via email)
Alan Bergstein, Esq., Office of the Attorney General (via email)