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May 19, 2020

Zoning Commission  
of the District of Columbia  
441 Fourth Street, N.W., Suite 220S  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Members of the Commission:

Westminster is proud and humbled to bring this great project to you. Our church building's age and condition inspired us to seize the incredible opportunity for a seismic leap in our ministry to support affordable housing in DC while replacing our aging church structure. It is our obligation to be stewards of this building with the land on which it sits and it is our church's mission and ministry to serve one of this community's largest needs: affordable housing.

We credit our development partners, Bozzuto and Dantes Partners, with bringing us a plan to make this vision a reality. Together this partnership submits for your review a proposal to construct over 100 affordable senior units up to 60% of AMI, an accomplishment that all in SW and DC can appreciate. Our new church building and the affordable senior housing are possible through the sale of our current parking lot area to host the market rate units. This total project brings a huge amount of affordable housing, much more than would be provided by a typical IZ requirement. We are proud of this.

The architectural questions were many. Our biggest concern was that our assembly space, wherever it be in the floor plan, would have to have the tallest ceilings possible. We held firmly to the need for this elevated sacred space. This meant we could not build on top of that section of the church. After much discussion, we made the clear decision to go a different way than our sister church redevelopments in SW. We placed our assembly area back between the two towers to present one larger identity of the church and its affordable housing to 4<sup>th</sup> and I. The proposed design compliments what our church is called to be and do in this time and place in our city.

In America, 1000s of churches close every year, many with beautiful church architecture. Today you can't just build a "church," as you could in the 1950s, and "they will come." These days, traditional church structures may actually keep people away.

**Westminster Federal EIN 53-0205898**

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Rev. Brian E. Hamilton- Co-Pastor - 202-641-8220 cell - [beh@westminsterdc.org](mailto:beh@westminsterdc.org)

The Presbyterian phrase “reformed and always reforming” is in our DNA. Westminster is one of the first 13 PCUSA congregations to welcome and ordain openly LGBTQ people; the first in the DMV to have a woman solo pastor; the founder of Food & Friends AIDS ministry; and now the church where Jazz and Blues are the sacred sound. We want to add “affordable housing” to this list of the ways God has been reforming us and our ministry through the years.

We do not want to “look like a church.” We want to “be the church” the Spirit is calling us to be today. We humbly ask that you look favorably on this aspirational project of committed partners, each of whom has made sacrifices to make the whole possible.

With your support, the Westminster congregation will do everything it can to continue being leaven in the beautiful loaf of SW, salt, and light.

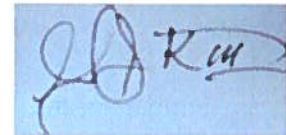
Sincerely,



Rev. Ruth Hamilton,  
Co-Pastor



Rev. Brian Hamilton,  
Co-Pastor



Elder George Kerr III,  
Clerk of Session



Elder Robin Alexander



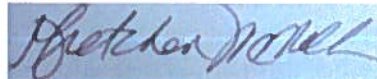
Elder Cliff Cooper



Elder Harry Kim



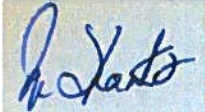
Elder Nick Mann



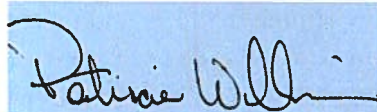
Elder Gretchen McMullen



Elder Kate McPhaul



Elder Melanie Shanks



Elder Pat Williams

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