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October 27, 2022

**BY IZIS**

Mr. Anthony J. Hood, Chairman  
D.C. Zoning Commission  
One Judiciary Square  
441 4th Street, N.W.  
Second Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Zoning Commission Case No. 22-13  
Application of The Wesley Theological Seminary of the United Methodist Church  
for Approval for a Campus Plan to Thrive in Place (2022-2032)  
4500 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Square 1600, Lots 6 (818 and 819), 7, 8 and 9.

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission:

We appreciate the Commission providing an opportunity for the Seminary to further explore the Zoning Regulations to provide an alternative way to proceed with an application for its Campus property. This includes an analysis and proposal in response to the request of the Zoning Commission that the Seminary team review Subtitle X to determine if there is an alternative method of proceeding with respect to its pending Campus Plan application to obtain approval of the proposed dormitory building housing both Seminary and American University students, thereby allowing the Seminary to Thrive in Place.

After a thorough review of the Regulations and as discussed below, we believe the following provides a basis for proceeding with the application under a process which is supportable under the Regulations and the Commission's established authority.

I. Background and Guiding Principles for Analysis:

A. In arriving at its decision to proceed with Landmark, the Seminary analyzed every alternative to be able to Thrive in Place and a ground lease mechanism was the only solution that would provide both new modern housing for Wesley students and ensure long-term financial stability to the Seminary with a substantial lump sum payment upfront and a stream of guaranteed annual payments for many years to come. Post-hearing suggestions by NLC-SVWHCA that the

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Seminary sell or lease its property to AU and/or sell the three residential lots on University Avenue for development are directly contrary to the longstanding desires of the community and adopted as Campus Plan conditions. These dramatic changes would surely create negative and/or unintended consequences for the neighborhood. Neither alternative would achieve the necessary financial support for the Seminary's educational mission in this location and would invade the campus-defining Green Open Space on University Avenue.

B. A PUD can be within a campus plan as the Commission is aware from cases involving George Washington University.

C. A dormitory housing both Seminary and AU students is a permitted use in a residential zone subject to Zoning Commission approval. However, the Commission expressed concern that the Campus Plan process may not be the correct process to approve the New Dormitory because of the following language in Subtitle X. "[T]he campus plan process shall not serve as a process to create general commercial activities or developments unrelated to the educational mission of the applicant (emphasis added) (Subtitle X. Section 101.4). The Commission questioned whether the primarily income producing function of the New Dormitory was an adequate relationship with Wesley's educational mission. The Commission specifically suggested that the PUD process may be an alternative process which would address this concern. Chairman Hood cited previous PUD cases which were used to secure the viability of religious institutions. After careful analysis, Wesley concurs that a PUD does address this concern as the Commission would have the authority to approve a dormitory use which includes Seminary students and students from the immediately adjacent American University.

D. The Seminary needs an approved campus plan and it has been without one since June 2022.

II. Given the foregoing, the Seminary proposes the following alternative processes utilizing the PUD process in conjunction with a campus plan approval for the Seminary:

A. Amend the existing Campus Plan application on an expedited basis to include within its boundaries a PUD for the entire campus. The PUD would include a consolidated PUD for the New Dormitory and a first stage PUD for the balance of the campus. The PUD would retain the existing RA-1 zoning. Taken together, the Campus Plan and PUD including the New Dormitory can be developed in compliance with the applicable RA-1 development standards, including the currently proposed height (72 feet) and FAR (1.08 with IZ).

B. The PUD process would require an evaluation of benefits in relation to any flexibility that may be requested and the ability of the Seminary to remain in the District and continue its substantial contribution to racial equity and the religious life of the community.

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Significantly, the combined Campus Plan and PUD process will incorporate the substantial neighborhood benefits and commitments made by the Seminary to ANC 3D and the community.

We look forward to the opportunity to detail these benefits and further refine the design of the New Dormitory through the PUD process. In order to facilitate this process, the Seminary is requesting that the Commission table its decision on the pending Campus Plan application in order to allow the Seminary to amend the pending application and submit a related PUD application.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

GREENSTEIN DELORME & LUCHS, P.C.



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John Patrick Brown, Jr.



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Lyle M. Blanchard

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on October 27, 2022, the foregoing letter was delivered via electronic mail to the following:

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