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Subject: Office of Planning FAIL -- Opposition on DC Zoning Case Number 23-02
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To: DC Zoning Commissioners and Office of Zoning

As a long-standing resident of the Striverâs Row Historic District, I am writing to push back on the high-rise project being proposed at 1617 U Street.

Given the total lack of transparency on the part of city agencies, the surrounding residents have been left in the dark regarding any and all details. Thatâs not surprising given that the proposed structure is an 11 story behemoth that will tower over the surrounding historic rowhouses on V Street, 17th Street & Seaton Street. Clearly, the players who have been brokering this deal behind closed doors are well aware that their best hope at maximizing the siteâs ROI is to keep as many residents as possible in the dark.

This project should not even be considered, let alone â rubber stampedâ until all the facts are on the table and made public. A short list of these include:

1. What is to become of the Police & Fire stations? Thatâs of major importance to our Ward 1 neighborhood. No consideration should be given to this project until those plans are revealed, including proposed locations and their financial implications. We â taxpayers â have a RIGHT to know.
2. Has a Developer been selected? If not, the candidate list should be public knowledge.
3. What studies (if any) have been conducted to determine the impact of daylight on surrounding streets? This is a basic component of any normal review process, so where are those graphics?
4. A 10 or 11 story building along narrow V Street is a completely preposterous proposal, and itâs not going to happen. Therefore, what massing diagrams have been prepared to allow for an informed analysis of any/all impacts this project will present to the immediate neighbors?

The above is not written on a â sure would be nice to knowâ basis. These are just some of the pertinent FACTS that we (residents, homeowners & taxpayers) have a RIGHT TO KNOW. Our right as taxpayers is of particular relevance given that we are talking about handing over PUBLIC LAND to a private developer. Developers, construction companies, etc. will be enriched at the cityâs expense, with no articulation of what is being provided in return.

Inserting MU10 zoning on this site is completely unjustified, and thus far there has been no attempt to explain the thought process behind it. The tallest buildings around, or even nearby, this site do not exceed 8 stories, and thatâs along 16th St â a major corridor. There are two 8 story apartment buildings at the intersection of 17th & T Street â but they are set back considerably on all exposed sides with beautiful landscaping. There are currently way too many unanswered questions to proceed with any approvals related to this wholly inappropriate proposal. Letâs start with who has decided that relocating vital public services is in the interest of anyone other than the developer (thatâs not a rhetorical question). Then letâs see an actual proposed building envelope and all the related impact studies, including environmental.

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