

TESTIMONY LETTER For Submission to the DC Zoning Commission (ZC)

Re: ZC Case 25-13 – Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework

Regarding: Proposed zoning for the block bounded by Wisconsin Avenue, Albemarle Street, 42nd Street and River Road (all NW)

Submitted by:

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DC Zoning Commission

441 4th Street NW, Suite 200-S

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Members of the Commission:

I live in Ward 3 and am a property owner and resident at 4101 Albemarle Street NW (Cityline at Tenley building). I am writing to comment on Case 25-13. I want to specifically comment on the proposed zoning change for the above-referenced block EXCLUDING my building.

This block is currently zoned as MU-7B except for a) the 2 protected properties (the 1855 Methodist Cemetery and the adjoining church site which has existed since 1840, formerly Eldbrooke Methodist Church, now Citizen Heights Church) which are zoned as RA-1 and b) the northwest corner of the block which currently has mixed-use buildings along 42nd Street and River Road which is zoned as MU-3A. Case 25-13 proposes to change the zoning for the block (except the 2 protected properties) from MU-7B or MU-3A to MU-8A/WA. I think this zoning change is inappropriate except as it relates to Cityline at Tenley and for the reasons below I am requesting maintaining the existing zoning.

Maintaining the existing zoning on the 2 relevant portions of this block (4125 Albemarle Street NW and the northwest corner of the block where 42nd Street and River Road NW intersect) is appropriate since they both serve as transition zones between high-density locations and the adjacent residential areas west of 42nd Street NW. A zoning change to MU-8A will be a big change to the character of the block, a much larger change than what the change will mean on the adjacent block east of Wisconsin Avenue which has Fort Drive and Jackson-Reed High

School property as a buffer zone to adjacent residential areas. The current zoning seems more appropriate for the character and components of these specific parcels, specifically:

- This block is adjacent to a large public elementary school (Janney School) and at least 4 nearby private day cares/nursery schools (St. Albans Early Childhood Center, Two Birds, Broadcasters and St. Columba's) as well as a public afterschool program at Janney which result in a significant amount of young child and family pedestrian and vehicle activity during daylight hours Monday to Friday. The ANC has also called out a gap in considering the dominant educational character of the area in the Framework. This block has a significantly younger and precarious daily pedestrian pattern than on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue which primarily consists of middle and high school age children coming and going to Jackson-Reed High School and Alice Deal Middle School. Before any change is made to the zoning on this block, I suggest vehicular and pedestrian traffic studies be completed in order to assess the advisability of increasing vehicle trips on Albemarle and 42nd Streets, which in addition to having high-volume educational institution use are both primary pass-through streets. Albemarle is a main thoroughfare for people travelling East/West to and from American University Park and 42nd Street is a heavily-travelled pass-through street for vehicles travelling between Nebraska Avenue and River Road. Any study should factor in the potential for additional traffic on both streets should the River School relocation to 4220 Nebraska Avenue be approved.
- A zoning change to 4125 Albemarle Street NW in particular (currently the location of Iona Senior Services which has been in that location for 35 years) would potentially introduce additional commercial activity, traffic and loading dock requirements which will make a congested, pedestrian-busy corridor even more hazardous than it already is. Any development at this corner would need to consider 1) the existing loading zone and truck capacity along the alleyway between Iona and the Cityline at Tenley mixed-use building, 2) where the Iona senior community resource would be displaced to, either temporarily or permanently, and 3) its adjacency to two National Register of Historic Places and DC Inventory of Historic Sites locations (Eldbrooke, now Citizen Heights, Church on River Road and the 1855 Methodist Cemetery behind). The cemetery also contains two DC Heritage trees, a 125 year old Tulip Poplar and a 200 year old White Oak and any impact to them and the cemetery's critical retaining wall would need care.
- If the zoning is changed such that a building taller than the current Iona Senior Services is built, the shadow line will impact the cemetery and its heritage trees and since it is also across the alleyway from existing Cityline at Tenley building, a taller building will have a significant impact on shadowing and sightlines for a minimum of 32 residential

condominium owners. A zoning change in the current MU-3A part of the block will have similar impacts.

In summary, while I support expedited development and a more vibrant neighborhood including more affordable housing, the zoning change proposed for parts of this specific block seems out of character, imprudent safety- and historic preservation-wise and in terms of potential direct impact to at least 32 property owners. At a minimum, further vehicle and pedestrian traffic, sightline and shadow line studies seem prudent and a more clearly delineated church/cemetery/tree site protection plan should be considered prior to a final zoning decision.

Lastly, as a general comment about the overall Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework zoning changes and based on the most recent ANC3E meeting which I attended, I support so-called Enhanced Matter of Right development which includes IZ+ and a PUD option, but with a form-based code (or some such) to provide more detailed design and public space improvement parameters consistent with the Framework.

Thank you,

Daniel Clohossey [considered virtually signed as submitted]