



Exalting Christ | Equipping Believers | Embracing Community

GREATER MT. CALVARY HOLY CHURCH

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Archbishop Alfred A. Owens, Jr., *Senior Pastor* • Dr. Susie C. Owens, *Co-Pastor* • Bishop T. Cedric Brown, *Associate Pastor*

September 30, 2020

DC Office of Zoning
Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Letter of Support for Proposed Zoning Map Amendment for 600 Block of Rhode Island Avenue

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission:

On behalf of Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church ("GMCHC"), I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy. I am writing to you to express my strong support for the redevelopment of nine parcels along the south side of the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue encompassing over 122,631 square feet (2.8± acres) in Square 3623 (collectively, "South RIA") of which GMCHC is the majority land owner. GMCHC has authorized Jair Lynch Real Estate Partners along with The Wilkes Company, which owns two of the nine parcels, to submit an application for a proposed Zoning Map amendment.

GMCHC was established in 1966 and has since grown to a congregation of almost 8,000 active and faithful members. GMCHC currently has over 60 ministries that are integral to serving the spiritual, cultural, social, and mental health needs of our congregation and the larger community. Carried out through our faith, the value that these services bring to the wellbeing of those in need cannot be underestimated, especially in light of the challenging times our community is currently facing.

As you may know, in the face of mounting economic demands, many religious institutions are struggling to maintain the level of service they provide to the community. Many are experiencing significant downturns in their communities both in numbers of members and in fiscal support.

Fortunately, over the decades, GMCHC's membership has remained resilient and connected to the community in several important ways. For instance, starting in 1995, GMCHC invested in a number of properties in the neighborhood, including the GMCHC-owned parcels as part of South RIA. The parcels were repurposed for retail and church program uses, including a Food Bank, Clothing Boutique, Family Life Community Center, and Calvary Healthcare (which provides specialized services to the community) just to name a few. In 2011, GMCHC actively participated in the Rhode Island Avenue Small Area Action Plan. In 2013, GMCHC made the strategic decision to redevelop several assets in its real estate portfolio, including the properties on the south side of Rhode Island Avenue directly across from our sanctuary at 610 Rhode Island

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EXHIBIT NO.3B

Avenue. This has required countless hours over the years, working internally with our membership and neighboring land owners (including The Wilkes Company). This alignment of the property owners came together in 2019, and the proposed Zoning Map amendment was subsequently endorsed by the Eckington Civic Association and ANC 5E in June 2020.

Seven years after outlining a development strategy, we are finally able to move forward collectively in an effort to rezone all the South RIA properties consistent with the Future Land Use Map of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan as amended by the D.C. Council in 2012. GMCHC sees a bright future for Rhode Island Avenue, which includes GMCHC remaining as an anchor institution. To that end, GMCHC has elected to be a long term Ground Lessor/Owner in partnership with Jair Lynch and GMCHC will continue to own fee simple five additional parcels and its sanctuary on the north side of the 600 block of Rhode Island Avenue.

The proposed map amendment presents GMCHC with an invaluable opportunity to advance its spiritual mission in the midst of significantly challenging economic and social times. As such, I respectfully request the Zoning Commission support the proposed Zoning Map amendment, a Comprehensive Plan consistency case, for the South RIA parcels with great haste.

Thank you for your continued service to the community, and for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred A. Owens, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bishop Alfred A. Owens, Jr., Founder and Senior Pastor
Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church