

RE: Concerns re: BZA App. No. 19689 - Meridian development project

EXHIBIT A

Shaw, Eric (OP)

Tue 7/24/2018 5:50 PM

To: Perry, Amanda Fox (SMD 1C08) <1C08.ANC@dc.gov>;

Cc: bnadeau@dccouncil.us <bnadeau@dccouncil.us>; Steingasser, Jennifer (OP) <jennifer.steingasser@dc.gov>;

1 attachments (637 KB)

BZA 19689 - OP Report.pdf;

Commissioner Perry

Attached is the Office of Planning report on BZA Case 19689. It details our analysis and recommendation to the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

With regards to your concerns about conformance with the FLUM and Comprehensive Plans - while OP's BZA does not include information on the Comprehensive Plan I assure you that there are multiple checks by OP and other review agencies to ensure that projects are not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan before a project is set down for consideration by the BZA. I believe the resolution by ANC 1C has been included in the materials associated with this file.

Eric Shaw

**Eric D. Shaw** • Director

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From: Perry, Amanda Fox (SMD 1C08)**Sent:** Monday, July 23, 2018 8:08 AM

To: Shaw, Eric (OP) <Eric.Shaw@dc.gov>; Steingasser, Jennifer (OP) <jennifer.steingasser@dc.gov>; Jesick, Matthew (OP) <matthew.jesick@dc.gov>; Lawson, Joel (OP) <joel.lawson@dc.gov>; bnadeau@dccouncil.us; Mendelson, Phil (COUNCIL) <PMENDELSON@DCCOUNCIL.US>; shawthorne@dccouncil.us; esilverman@dccouncil.us; abonds@dccouncil.us; dgrasso@dccouncil.us

Cc: Guthrie, Ted (SMD 1C03) <1C03@anc.dc.gov>; Huezo, Hector (SMD 1C02) <1C02@anc.dc.gov>; Irani, Amir (SMD 1C01) <1C01@anc.dc.gov>; Reynolds, Wilson (SMD 1C07) <1C07@anc.dc.gov>; Scozzaro, A.Tianna (SMD 1C04) <1C04@anc.dc.gov>

Subject: Concerns re: BZA App. No. 19689 - Meridian development project

Director Shaw:

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.19689
EXHIBIT NO.89A

I am writing in regard to BZA Application No. 19689 – 2300 16th Street, NW – Meridian International Center. The BZA is scheduled to vote on this matter on Wednesday, July 25th. Your office filed a report in this case on June 1st, 2018, and I write to you today to express my concerns with the content of that report and my disappointment in the way the Office of Planning has handled its assessment of this proposal. Part of OP's role as the lead planning agency for DC is to assess the project's potential benefits, as your office did here. However, OP is also tasked with conducting a meaningful assessment of the project's impacts, which is missing from this report.

This proposed project includes 110 units of residential housing and a 10,000 square foot conference center in an already crowded residential neighborhood. OP was tasked with reviewing the project and taking a position on the following requests for special exception relief:

- modification of a private school plan;
- extension of the RA-4 zone 35 feet west into the RA-2 zone.

The Office of Planning (OP) did not conduct any independent studies of the project's impacts and relied instead on the Applicant's statement and the MOUs between the developer and the neighbors to determine that there would be no undue burden on the community. The existence of MOUs between the community, the Applicant, and Meridian International Center does not relieve OP of its duty as the lead agency for planning in the District with the responsibility of advising our zoning bodies on planning, to assess the project's impacts, especially in light of the power and resource imbalance between the community and the developer. Furthermore, there is no indication that OP assessed Meridian International's compliance with the previous BZA orders governing its operations as a private school. As we demonstrated at the BZA hearing on June 13th, Meridian is not a private school and is not entitled to a further expansion of its operations.

In addition, and perhaps most troubling, is OP's failure to consider the Comprehensive Plan and the associated land use maps. The ANC recently discovered that the FLUM designation for the lot in question is for moderate density buildings, consistent with "a mix of single family homes, 2-4 unit buildings, row houses, and low-rise apartment buildings." Regardless of the proposed project's conformance with the zoning regulations, the project must also comply with the FLUM. At eight stories plus a penthouse, this project clearly exceeds the moderate density allowance. The failure by OP and the other relevant agencies to research and disclose this information is troubling and fosters a sense of distrust with the community.

On July 11th, ANC 1C unanimously adopted a resolution asking the BZA to task OP with conducting its own independent studies on the impacts this project will have on noise, emergency response, the environment, light and air, emissions, refuse, in addition to other basic land use planning impacts. To allow this project to proceed in its current form, without impact analysis and rezoning, would weaken the

concept of thorough and deliberate municipal planning, and would result in undue hardship and injury to the surrounding community. I respectfully ask that OP request that the BZA defer any action on this application in order for OP to properly consider the impacts of this project with independent OP studies, including conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. This case can only proceed after these tasks have been carried out.

I have attached the above-mentioned ANC reports to this email. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about this matter as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Amanda Fox Perry

Commissioner, ANC 1C08

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