

October 21, 2018

3807 Yuma Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Honorable Frederick L. Hill, Chairperson,
Honorable Anthony J. Hood, Chairperson, Zoning Commission
Honorable Lesyllee M. White
Honorable Lorna John
Honorable Carlton Hart, National Capital Planning Commission Designee

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: BZA Case No. 19823: Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church - Sunrise Senior Living,
3920 Alton Place, NW (the "Sunrise Project")

Dear Chairperson Hood and Members of the Board:

Thank you for this opportunity to express our opposition to the current plan for the Sunrise Project at 3920 Alton Place, NW.

The Sunrise Project is located about a block from our home at 3807 Yuma Street, NW. We love our home and neighborhood and have lived here for more than 35 years. We are active in the community in various ways, including volunteering at the Water Ministry for the homeless at the nearby St. Columba's Episcopal Church. We believe we have a good grasp of the characteristics and needs of the neighborhood, and are not people who oppose urban development at any cost. We understand that living in the city involves some compromises with urbanization.

At the same time, we do not believe that the Sunrise Project represents a balanced approach for the surrounding neighborhood. We believe that is clear from the many, many exceptions that are being requested from the current zoning. The planned building, which will place commercial activities in a residential neighborhood, is big and high, and sacrifices green space enjoyed by the neighborhood. It also eliminates the one amenity that is currently used by those in the neighborhood with small children, the children's playground.

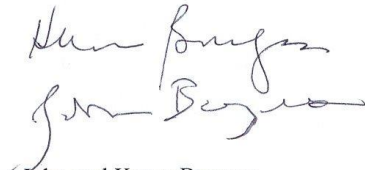
Most significantly, it is very troubling to us that the planners of the Sunrise Project have not been good neighbors to those who will most immediately be affected by their project – the homes on 39th Street, NW that immediately abut the project. The families in these homes bought them based on the current zoning, fully expecting a neighborhood environment, including some quiet and nearby green space. Instead, their houses will be towered over by a structure that is too big for the space, and that will introduce commercial activity – trucks, the coming and going of staff, etc.—right next to their property lines.

We understand that the church feels pressure to redevelop the property to maintain itself and its congregation, but we wonder whether the needs of the current small congregation should trump those of the nearby neighbors and the neighborhood as a whole. A smaller project, which is sensitive to the needs and concerns of the nearby neighbors, would be more appropriate.

Finally, we understand that Sunrise has said that it cannot sustain its business using the current zoning. With due respect, if that is the case, perhaps they should look elsewhere where there is more property and space for their business.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our views. We appreciate that your task is a complicated one and involves balancing many interests. Please take into account our view that the proposed Sunrise Project, with its many requests for exceptions, does not represent a sensitive compromise for this neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of John and Karen Burgess. The top signature is 'Karen Burgess' and the bottom signature is 'John Burgess'.

John and Karen Burgess
3807 Yuma Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016