

Frederick Hill  
Chairman  
Board of Zoning Adjustment

RE: BZA Case 20266 – 3400 Connecticut Ave., N.W.

Dear Mr. Hill,

I write regarding the hearing for the parking exemption request for the Macklin project on Newark Street. I oppose the request and ask that you deny the Applicant's request for a waiver of the parking requirements for the site. The Applicant has already received the benefit of a 50% reduction in parking requirements because of the proximity to Metro. There is no justification for giving a further reduction and a review of the BZA data base shows that the BZA has not granted an exemption where no parking is provided for a multi-unit building.

When the Applicant appeared before the ANC to garner their support for the approval of the project as it went through the Historic Preservation Review, he testified that if he needed to provide parking, he would do so. He further asserted that the time for the parking discussion was before the BZA. Now that he has gotten the ANC's approval and is before the BZA, he claims that it is not feasible to provide parking. That is not accurate.

First, some parking exists on the site. Contrary to the arguments made in Applicant's submission and echoed by the OPA report, that parking lot is grandfathered in so there is no reason it cannot remain.

Second, the Applicant does not meet the standard to receive a special exception. Among other things, the Applicant has to prove that the project will: 1) be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning regulations and maps, 2) not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property

The waiver is not in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning laws. Notably, 500.1(c) of the NC-3 zone purpose and intent provision states that zoning must "Provide for retention of existing housing within the Cleveland Park commercial area. . . to enhance pedestrian activity, safety, and consumer support for business in the commercial area."

I have lived directly across from the Macklin building for the past 20 years. Much has changed since I first moved in. Newark Street, while narrow, was fairly easy to traverse. As the years moved on and Amazon and companies like UBER became a way of life, the street became more and more congested with delivery trucks and ride shares stopping multiple times a day, routinely blocking the street. This causes cars to drive around these stopped vehicles, often causing dangerous situations since sight levels are poor because the Macklin sits right below a curve in the street. In addition, because the sidewalks on Newark Street are narrow with utility poles in the middle at several spots, pedestrians often walk on the street creating the potential for accidents. The addition of 30 new units, four houses, and new commercial tenants and removing existing parking will not enhance pedestrian safety, and, in fact, will only exacerbate it.

Likewise, the Applicant's request for a waiver directly undercuts consumer support for the businesses in the commercial area. Adding this amount of capacity, while at the same time removing the little bit of parking that is there, will negatively impact the current stores and restaurants, many of whom are struggling. Having 51 residences with multiple occupants and zero parking will make it impossible to find a parking space on Newark St., where folks often park, resulting in those shoppers and restaurant

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EXHIBIT NO.123

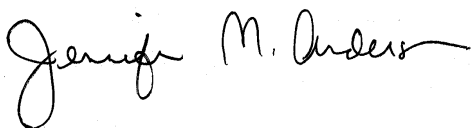
patrons going elsewhere, including just up the street to Cathedral Heights. Or, people will circle the neighborhood looking for parking which adds to congestion. I feel that many people underestimate this problem. The most recent survey conducted by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development in 2016 revealed that 86% of business owners believed the lack of parking supply was the most significant impediment to success. See <https://cpbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Cleveland-Park-Retail-Market-Analysis-and-Enhancement-Strategy-October-2016.pdf> Since that survey was conducted, the neighborhood has lost additional parking. DDOT is removing 3-4 spaces for the main street beautification project and we have lost 28 parking spots with the temporary closure of the service lane because of the pandemic. It is very difficult to anticipate the long-term effect of the pandemic but there is a noticeable lack of desire for public transport, which is not likely to change anytime soon. Metro ridership is down a staggering 93.6%. <https://www.wmata.com/initiatives/ridership-portal/Rail-Ridership-Change-Data-Portal.cfm>

Similarly, the Applicant does not meet the second prong that his proposed waiver will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property. Parking has always been a challenge on the street. Most days, spaces are filled from Connecticut Avenue to Highland. When parking is tight, it is not unusual to find drivers who partially block driveways to park and “run a quick errand”. Neighbors have missed work, meetings, and doctors’ appointments because of blocked driveways. That is likely to get far worse if the BZA grants the parking waiver. For example, Orange Theory recently moved in and attracted a bustling crowd to their classes. Many of those clients drive to their sessions and park on Newark St. after the spaces in the lot are full. Where are there to park now? What about the new commercial tenants?

Finally, I have attended the ANC meetings where the owner of the building has asserted that only one tenant in the building drives and, based on this statistic, he does not expect most tenants to have a car. A number of individuals who submitted comments in support of the waiver echo that number. While it sounds good, that number is not an accurate depiction of car owners in the building. While there certainly are people who do not have cars, there are an equal number of people that do have cars. And I’ve noticed in the last several months that just about every new tenant that moved in has a car. Since I live across the street and am working from home because of the pandemic, I have observed at least 7 tenants who park cars on the street, which is noticeably more congested than it was even two months ago. That is not likely to change given the current situation with the pandemic and the general unease with traveling in large crowds which would include the Metro.

For all the reasons listed above I request that you deny the parking waiver.

Thank you for your time.



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